

THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF
SANTILLANE.
VOLUME III.

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T H E

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A D V E N T U R E S

G I L L I S

Elizabeth Lysons



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THE
HISTORY
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

Of the loves of Gil Blas, and Signtora Lorença Sephora.

I WENT then to Xelva, to carry the good Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats we had stolen from him. I will freely own, that I was tempted, upon the road, to make myself master of this money, in order to begin my stewardship with good fortune. I might have played this trick without danger. I had nothing to do but to take a journey for five or six days, and return afterwards, as if I had performed my commission; neither Don Alphonso nor his father would have suspected my integrity. However, I did not yield to the temptation; I can even say, that I overcame it like a man of honour; which was not a little commendable in a young fellow, who had been used to the company of great rogues. A great many, who converse only with honest men, are not so scrupulous; those especially who have had

such trusts committed to their charge, as might be forfeited without prejudice to their reputation, could (if they pleased) give instances hereof.

Having thus restored the money to the merchant, who did not in the least expect it, I returned to the castle of Leyva. The Count de Polan was no longer there; he was set out again for Toledo, with Julia and Don Fernando. I found my new master more in love than ever with Seraphina, Seraphina charmed with him, and Don Cæsar ravished with the enjoyment of them both. I made it my study to get into the good graces of so tender a father, and succeeded in it; I was made steward of the house; I directed all; I received the money of the tenants, defrayed all the expenses of the family, and had an absolute authority over the men-servants: but I did not (as is usual with persons of my station) make an ill use of my power. I neither turned away such domestics as displeased me, nor required others to be absolutely at my devotion; if they addressed themselves directly either to Don Cæsar or his son, to ask any favour, I was so far from opposing them, that I spoke in their behalf. Besides, the marks which my masters gave me, every hour, of their affection, inspired me with a zeal for their service. I consulted only their interest; there was no legerdemain in my management; in short, I was such a steward as could not easily be met with.

Whilst I was hugging myself at my good fortune, Love, as if he had been jealous of what the blind goddess did for me, was resolved I should also have some favours to thank him for. Accordingly he inspired Signiora Lorença Sephora with a violent inclination for *Monsieur l'Intendant*. My conquest, to speak the truth like a faithful historian, bordered upon fifty; nevertheless, a cool air, an agreeable face, and two fine eyes, which she knew admirably well how to use to the best advantage, might make it pass for a piece of good fortune. I

could

could only have wished her a little more colour, for she was very pale, which I did not fail ascribing to her strict preservation of her honour.

The good dame lured me on for some time, by glances wherein her love was expressed visibly enough; but, instead of answering her ogles, I at first made as if I did not understand her drift: hereby I seemed a mere novice to her, at which she was not displeased. Imagining therefore that she ought not to confine herself to this dumb language, with a young fellow whom she did not think so knowing as he was, the first conversation we had together, she declared her sentiments to me in express terms, that I might no longer be ignorant of them. She went to work like a woman who was mistress of her art; she pretended to be in confusion whilst she spoke to me, and, after having fairly said whatever she had to say, she hid her face, to make me believe she was ashamed of having discovered her weakness to me. I was forced to surrender, and (though vanity had a greater share therein than inclination) I seemed very sensible of her goodness. I even affected to be pressing, and acted the passionate lover so well, that I incurred her reproaches. Lorença indeed reprimanded me; but with so much mildness, that, in advising me to have more discretion, she seemed not angry at my having failed in that point. I might have carried things farther, if my beloved object had not feared I should entertain a bad opinion of her virtue, if she granted me too easy a conquest. Thus we parted till a new interview, Sephora persuaded that her feigned resistance made me believe her a Vestal, and I full of the pleasing hope of putting soon an end to this adventure.

Things were in this posture, when a footman of Don Cæsar's brought me news that moderated my joy: this fellow was one of those curious servants, who make it their business to find out all that pas-

ses in the house. As he made his court to me very diligently, and entertained me every day with some novelty, he came one morning to tell me he had made a pleasant discovery, and that he would impart it to me, on condition I would keep his secret, seeing it concerned Signiora Lorença, whose resentment (as he said) he apprehended. I had too much a mind to hear what he had to tell me, not to promise him silence: however, without seeming in the least moved, I asked him with the greatest indifference, what the discovery was which was so diverting. "Lorença," says he, "introduces the surgeon of the village secretly into her apartment every night: he is a young fellow very well made, and my spark stays there a considerable time. Not but I believe," adds he with a malicious smile, "that all this may be done very innocently; but you will allow me, that a young fellow's sliding secretly into a woman's chamber, will incline folks to judge amiss of her."

Though this information gave me as much trouble as if I had really been in love, I took care not to shew it; I even forced myself to laugh at this news, which pierced me to the soul; but I made myself amends for this constraint, as soon as I saw myself without witnesses. I raged, I swore, and I considered what measures I should take. At one time despising Lorença, I thought of leaving her, without deigning to come to an eclairsissement with the coquet; at another time, imagining my honour concerned in driving away the surgeon, I proposed calling him to an account: this last resolution prevailed. I lay in ambush that evening, and accordingly saw my gentleman enter with a mysterious air into my duenna's apartment. There wanted but this to raise my fury. I went out of the castle, and posted myself upon the road by which my spark was to return. I waited for him without stirring, and every moment increased my desire of fighting with him:

in short, my enemy appeared, and I advanced some paces like a Hector to meet him ; but, I do not know how the devil it happened, I found myself seized on a sudden, like one of Homer's heroes, with a terror that stopped me. I was in as great a confusion as Paris, when he was to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my antagonist, who seemed to me strong and vigorous, and I thought his sword of an excessive length : all this made an impression upon me. Nevertheless, out of a point of honour, though I saw the danger with eyes that magnified it, and in spite of my natural temper, which strove obstinately to deter me, I had the courage to advance towards the surgeon, and to draw my rapier.

My action surprised him. "What is the matter," said he, "Signior Gil Blas ? Why these preparations ? What, are you disposed to be merry ?" "No, Mr. Barber," answered I, "I am in very good earnest. I will know whether you are as brave as gallant. Do not think that I will leave you in quiet possession of the good graces of the lady you come from visiting at the castle." "By St. Come," replied the barber, bursting out into a laughter, "here is a pleasant adventure ! Good God ! how deceitful are appearances ?" At these words, imagining that he had no greater stomach to fighting than myself, I grew more insolent. "Do not talk to me at that rate, friend," said I, "do not talk to me at that rate ; do not think I will be put off with your bare denial of it." "I see plainly," replies he, "that I shall be obliged to speak, to prevent the misfortune that may happen either to you or me. I am going then to reveal a secret to you, though persons of our profession cannot be too discreet. If Signiora Lorença introduces me privately into her chamber, it is to hide her distemper from the family ; she has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I go every night to dress : that is the cause of the visits whereat you are alarmed ; do not

disturb yourself any more upon that account. But," continued he, " if you are not satisfied with this discovery, and are resolved absolutely upon fighting, you need only say so ; I am not a man that will refuse to give you satisfaction." This said, he drew his long rapier, which made me tremble, and stood upon his guard. " It is enough," answered I, putting up my sword, " I am not so brutal as not to hear reason ; after what you have told me, I am no longer your enemy ; let us embrace." At this discourse, he soon saw I was not so inflexible as I seemed at first ; wherefore, putting up his sword laughing, he stretched out his arms, and we afterwards parted the best friends in the world.

From that time I never thought of Sephora but with disgust, and avoided all the opportunities she gave me of entertaining her in private ; which I did with so much care and industry, that she perceived it. Being struck with so great a change, she was resolved to know the cause ; and finding at last a way to speak to me by myself : " Pray, Mr. Steward," says she, " be pleased to tell me why you shun my sight so much ? It is true, I made the first advances, but you made a suitable return : let us call to mind, I beg you, the private conversation we had together ; you was then all fire, you are now all snow ; what is the meaning of all this ?" The question was very nice for an ingenuous man ; and, indeed, it put me very much to a stand. I do not now remember what answer I made the good lady : but I remember, it was as disagreeable to her as possible. Though one would have taken Sephora for a lamb, by her mild and modest air, she was a very tyger when in a passion. " I thought," said she, giving me a look full of spite and rage, " I thought I did a great deal of honour to a sorry fellow, like you, in discovering to him such sentiments, as several noble cavaliers would think themselves happy to have inspired. I am punished as I deserve,

deserve, for stooping so low as to a pitiful adventurer."

She did not stop there; I should have been too well off; but her tongue giving way to her passion, loaded me with a thousand epithets, one worse than another. I thought to have bore them with temper, and have reflected, that in disdaining to triumph over a virtue I had staggered, I had committed a crime never to be forgiven by a woman: but I was too fiery to suffer such abusive language, (as a man of sense, had he been in my place, would have but laughed at), and my patience was worn out. "Madam," said I, "let us despise nobody; if those cavaliers you mentioned had seen your back, I am sure their curiosity would have been satisfied, they would have looked no farther." I had no sooner made this stinging return, than the furious duenna gave me the swiftest box on the ear that ever was given by an enraged woman. I did not stay for a second, but avoided by a speedy flight, a shower of blows that would have fallen upon me.

I thanked heaven that I was got so well off of this false step, and I imagined that I had nothing more to fear, since the good lady had revenged herself. I thought that for her own honour she ought to conceal the adventure. Accordingly, a fortnight elapsed without my hearing any more of it; and I had almost forgotten it myself, when I was informed that Sephora was sick. I was good-natured enough to be concerned at the news; I pitied the woman, imagining that not being able to conquer a passion so ill returned, this unfortunate lover had fallen ill upon it. I represented to myself, with some sorrow, that I was the cause of her distemper; and I at least was grieved for the duenna, if I could not love her. How was I mistaken in my judgment of her? Her love being now turned into hatred, she was only contriving how to do me a mischief.

One morning as I was with Don Alphonso, I found that young cavalier melancholy and thoughtful; I asked him respectfully what ailed him. "I am chagrined," replied he, at finding Seraphina weak, unjust, and ungrateful. Does that astonish you?" continues he, observing that I heard him with surprise: "nevertheless nothing is more true. I do not know what reason you have given the duenna to hate you; but I can assure you, that you are become so hateful to her, that if you do not immediately leave this castle, she says her death is inevitable. You need not doubt but Seraphina, who has a value for you, at first opposed a hatred she could not gratify without injustice and ingratitude: but in short she is a woman; she tenderly loves Sephora, who has brought her up. This governante is, as it were, a mother to her, and she would think herself accessory to her death, if she did not satisfy her. As for me, as much as I love Seraphina, I shall never have that unmanly complaisance to subscribe to her sentiments therein: rather let all the duenna's in Spain perish, than I consent to the removal of a man, whom I rather look upon as a brother, than a domestic."

When Alphonso had thus spoken, I said, "My Lord, I was born to be the sport of fortune; I had flattered myself that she would leave persecuting me at your house, where every thing promised me happy and quiet days; however, I must resolve upon being banished from it, whatever pleasure I find in it." "No, no," replied Don Cæsar's generous son, "let me alone to bring Seraphina to reason; it shall never be said that you was sacrificed to the caprices of a duenna, for whom people have had but too much regard in other respects." "You will only exasperate Seraphina, my Lord," said I, "in contradicting her; I had rather retire, than expose myself by a longer stay to the danger of sowing dissension between such a happy couple; it would

would be a misfortune which I should never forgive myself."

Don Alphonso forbid my taking that resolution, and I found him so fully bent upon supporting me, that Lorença would undoubtedly have missed her aim, if I would have stood out. Sometimes being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted not to spare her; but when I considered, that, in revealing her disgrace, I should stab a poor creature of whose misfortunes myself was the cause, and whom two incurable distempers were visibly hurrying to the grave, I had no longer any resentment against her, but only pitied her. I judged, that since I was so dangerous a mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish peace in the castle by my absence. This I did next morning before day, without taking leave of my two masters, for fear they should, out of their friendship for me, oppose my departure: I contented myself with leaving in writing in my chamber an exact account of my stewardship.

C H A P. II.

What befel Gil Blas after his leaving the castle of Leyva; and with what good fortune his unsuccessful amours were followed.

I Was mounted upon a good horse of my own, and I had in my cloakbag 200 pistoles, best part whereof was taken from the banditti that were killed, and the 3000 ducats that were stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso had restored this sum entire out of his pocket, without suffering me to refund what I had fingered. Wherefore looking upon my effects as become my own lawful property, I enjoyed them without scruple. I was master then of a stock which prevented my being anxious for the future, besides the confident persons of my age always have in their own merit, and which was more, I had an agreeable

sylum at Toledo. I did not at all doubt but the Count de Polan would take a pleasure in giving a handsome reception to one of his deliverers, and offering him a lodging in his house. But I looked upon this nobleman as my last resource, and I resolved, before my going to him, to spend part of my money in travelling over the kingdoms of Murcia and Grenada, which I had a particular desire to see. With this intent I took the road to Almanza, whence continuing my journey I went from city to city till I came to Grenada, without meeting with any adventure. It seemed as if fortune, being satisfied with the tricks she had played me, was at last willing to cease persecuting me; but she was preparing several others, as will be seen by the sequel.

One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada, was Don Fernando de Leyva, son-in-law, as well as Don Alphonso, to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprised at meeting each other there. "How," cries he out, "Gil Blas, you in the city! what has brought you hither?" "My Lord," said I, "If you wonder at seeing me in this country, you will be more so, when you know why I quitted the service of Don Cæsar and his son." Then I told him all that had passed between Sephora and me without concealing any thing from him. He laughed very heartily: then growing serious, "Friend," said he, "I offer to be your mediator in this affair, I will go write to my sister-in-law." "No, no, my Lord," said I, interrupting him, "I beg you do not write. I did not leave the castle of Leyva, to return again so soon: make, if you please, another use of the kindness you have for me. If any of your acquaintance wants a secretary or steward, I would pray you to speak to him in my favour: I dare venture to assure you that he will not reproach you with helping him to a bad servant." "With all my heart," replied he, "I will do as you desire me; I came

to Grenada to see an old aunt who is sick. I shall stay three weeks longer, after which I shall set out for my castle at Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge at that house," continued he, shewing me a palace a little way off. "Come to me in two or three days, perhaps by that time I may have found you a convenient post."

Accordingly the first time I saw him, he said, "The Archbishop of Grenada, my friend and relation, wants a young man of some learning, who writes a good hand, to copy his writings over fairly, for he is a great author. He has composed I do not know how many homilies, as he continues to do every day, which meet with great applause. As I thought you a proper person, I proposed you, and he has promised to take you; go to him in my name. You may judge by the reception he gives you, whether I have spoken to your advantage or not."

The offer was as good as I could desire; wherefore having prepared myself to appear in the best manner possible before the prelate, I went one morning to the archbishop's. If I were to imitate the makers of romances, I should make a pompous description of the episcopal palace of Grenada; I should enlarge upon the structure of the building, and extol the richness of the furniture; I should speak of the statues and pictures therein, and should not spare the reader the least of the stories they represented; but I will rest satisfied with saying, that it equalled the palaces of our kings in magnificence.

I found in the apartments a number of ecclesiastics and swordsmen, most part whereof were his Grace's officers, as chaplains, gentlemen, masters of the horse, or valets de chambre. The laymen had almost all of them sumptuous cloaths, one should rather have taken them for lords than servants. They were haughty, and aimed at being
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thought men of importance. I could not forbear laughing at them within myself. "Faith," said I, "these fellows are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude without feeling it; for if they felt it, methinks they should not be so stiff and proud." I addressed myself to a grave fat gentleman who stood at the archbishop's closet-door, to open and shut it according as was necessary. I asked him civilly if it was not possible to speak with his Grace. "Stay a little," says he, with a stiff air, "his Grace is coming out to go to mass, he will give you a moment's audience *en passant*." I answered not a word, but armed myself with patience, and resolved to enter into conversation with some of his officers; but they began to examine me from head to foot, without vouchsafing to answer me a word. After which they looked upon each other with a scornful smile, at the liberty I had taken in intruding into their discourse.

I was (I own) entirely confounded at seeing myself so treated by valets. I had not well recovered myself, when the closet-door opened, and the archbishop appeared. Immediately there was a profound silence among the officers, who laid at once aside their insolent behaviour, to appear respectful before their master. This prelate was in his 69th year, and was made almost like my uncle the canon Giles Peres, that is to say, thick and short. He was besides very bow-legged, and so bald, that he had only one tuft of hair left behind, which obliged him to cover his head with a fine linen cap with long ears. In spite of all this I thought he had the air of a man of quality, undoubtedly because I knew him to be one. We persons of an interior rank look upon great men with a prepossession, which often gives them an air of grandeur that nature has denied them.

The archbishop came up to me immediately, and asked me with a voice full of softness, what was my business.

business. I told him that I was the young man of whom Don Fernando de Leyva had spoken to him. He gave me not time to say more, but cried out, "What, you are the man whom he extolled so much! I take you into my service; you are a person of consequence to me, you need only stay here." At these words he went out, leaning upon two gentlemen of the horse, after having given audience to some ecclesiastics who had something to impart to him. He was hardly got out of the chamber, but the same officers who had before disdained my conversation, now sought after it. They immediately surrounded me, shewed me all manner of civility, and expressed their joy at my being become one of the archbishop's household. They had heard the words their master had spoken to me, and immediately desired to know upon what footing I was to be with him; but I had the malice not to satisfy their curiosity, to revenge myself for their contempt.

His Grace was not long ere he returned, and called me into his closet to discourse me in private. I judged that he had a design to try my genius; wherefore I was upon my guard, and prepared myself to weigh every word. At first he examined me in the learned languages; I answered him very pertinently to his questions, and he found that I was conversant with the Greek and Latin authors. Then he tried me in logic; it was what I expected; and he found me a perfect master. Hereupon, "your education," said he, with some surprise, "has not been neglected; and now let me see your writing. I drew a sheet out of my pocket which I had brought on purpose wherewith the prelate was not ill pleased. "I am satisfied with your hand," said he, "and yet more with your wit; I will thank my nephew Don Fernando for having procured me such a pretty servant; he has made me a valuable present."

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We were interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Grenada, who came to dine with the archbishop. I left them together, and withdrew amongst the officers, who overwhelmed me then with their civilities. When it was time to dine, I went to eat with them; and if they observed me during our repast, I was not behindhand with them. What an outward shew of wisdom was there in the ecclesiastics! they all seemed to me like saints, so great a respect I paid to the place where I was. It never so much as came into my head that it might all be counterfeit; as if there were not examples of the like amongst the fathers of the church.

I sat next an old valet de chambre called *Melchior de la Ronda*, who took care to serve me with the best bits. The regard he had for me, made me have the same for him, and my politeness charmed him. "Signior Cavalier," said he softly to me after dinner, "I should be glad of a little conversation with you." At the same time he led me into a retired part of the palace, where nobody could overhear us, and there he began this discourse. "My son, I have found in myself an inclination for you, from the first moment I saw you; I will give you a certain proof of it, by reposing in you a confidence which will be of great service to you. You are here in a house where the real good men and the hypocrites live promiscuously together; it will cost you an infinite time to know what ground you walk upon. I am going to spare you such a long and disagreeable study, by discovering to you both the one and the other. By this means you may easily know how to behave yourself.

"I will begin," continued he, "with his Grace. He is a very pious prelate, who is incessantly employed in edifying the people, and in inciting them to virtue, by sermons full of excellent morals, which he composes himself. He has abandoned the court these twenty years, to give himself entirely up to the

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the zeal which he has for his flock. He is a man of learning, and a great orator; his whole delight is in preaching, and his audience are ravished when they hear him. Perhaps there may be some vanity in his way of acting; but besides its not being in the power of men to penetrate the heart, it would very ill become me to scan the faults of a person whose bread I eat. If I were allowed to reprehend any thing in my master, I should blame his severity: instead of having an indulgence for the weakness of ecclesiastics, he punishes them with too much rigour. Above all, he persecutes without mercy, such as, relying upon their innocence, undertake to justify themselves legally, in contempt of his authority. I find also another fault in him, which he has in common with many persons of quality: although he loves his domestics, he has not any regard to their services; and he lets them grow old, without thinking to procure them any settlement. If he sometimes makes them a present, they only owe it to the goodness of somebody that has spoken for them; of himself he would never think of doing them the least service."

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master. After this he disclosed to me his thoughts of the ecclesiastics with whom we had dined. He painted them after a manner very different from their countenances. He did not indeed describe them as dishonest persons, but only as sorry priests: however he excepted some, whose virtue he extolled very much. I was no longer at a loss after what manner to behave myself. That very evening, at supper, I provided myself, like them, with a grave outside that cost nothing; one need not wonder that there are so many hypocrites.

CHAP. III.

Gil Blas becomes the favourite of the Archbishop of Grenada, and the person through whose means his favours are granted.

I Had been after dinner to fetch my things, and my horse from the inn where I lodged; afterwards I returned to supper to the Archbishop's, where I had a very handsome chamber, and a down-bed. The next day his Grace had me called early in the morning; it was to give me a homily to transcribe, but he ordered me to do it with the utmost exactness. I did not fail; I forgot neither accent, nor stop, nor comma; accordingly he expressed a joy thereat mingled with surprise. "Good God!" said he, in a transport, when he had cast his eyes over every leaf of my copy, "did one ever see any thing so correct? You are too good a transcriber, not to be a grammarian. Speak freely to me, friend, did you find nothing in my writings that shocked you? was there no negligence in the style; no improper term?" "O, my Lord," replied I with a modest air, "I have not understanding enough to make critical observations; and if I had, I am persuaded your Grace's works would escape my censure." The prelate smiled at my answer, and made no reply; but he let me see, through all his piety, that he was not an author for nothing.

I completed my getting into his good graces by this flattery. I became dearer to him from day to day; and I was informed by Don Fernando, who came to see him very often, that he had such a value for me, that I might depend upon my fortune's being made. This was confirmed to me a little after by my master himself, and on this occasion. One night in his closet he repeated to me in a rapture a homily which he was to speak the next day in the cathedral. Not satisfied with asking me my thoughts

thoughts in general, he obliged me to tell him what places had touched me most. I had the good fortune to name those which he esteemed most himself, his favourite pieces. By this I passed, in his opinion, for a man who had a delicate taste of the real beauties of a work: "This," cried he, "is what is called having a taste and judgment. Go, friend, I will assure you, you have not got Midas's ears." In a word, he was so well pleased with me, that he said with a lively air: "Gil Blas, make yourself easy about your fortune for the future, I will take care to render it perfectly agreeable to you; I love you, and to convince you of it, I will make you my confident."

I had no sooner heard these words, than I fell at his Grace's feet, quite overcome with acknowledgment; I embraced his bowed legs with all my heart, and I looked upon myself as a man who was in a fair way to be rich. "Yes, my child," continues the Archbishop, whose discourse had been interrupted by my action, "I will intrust you with my most secret thoughts; listen with attention to what I am going to tell you. I take a pleasure in preaching; the Lord blesses my homilies; they strike sinners, make them return to their duty, and have recourse to repentance. I have the satisfaction of seeing the miser, terrified with the images I draw of his covetousness, open his treasures, and distribute them with a lavish hand; of drawing a voluptuous man from his pleasures; of filling hermitages with ambitious men; and of confirming in her duty a wife that has been staggered by her deluding lover. These conversions, which are frequent, ought alone to incite me to continue my labours. Nevertheless I will confess my weakness to you; I propose another reward to myself, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain; it is the regard which the world pays to fine polished writings. The honour of passing for a perfect orator, has

has charms worth my courting. My works are thought equally expressive and delicate ; but I would fain avoid the fault of those good authors who write too long ; and go off the stage with all my reputation unsullied.

“ Therefore, my dear Gil Blas,” continued the the prelate, “ I require one thing of your zeal ; whenever you find my pen favours of old age, when you find me flag, do not fail to apprise me of it. I do not trust myself in that respect, my self love might deceive me ; this observation requires a disinterested judgment ; I make choice of yours, which I know to be good ; I refer myself to you.” “ Thank Heaven, my Lord,” replied I, “ you are yet at a great distance from that time ; besides, a genius of your Grace’s stamp will preserve itself much better than any other ; or, to speak more justly, you will be always the same. I look upon you like another Cardinal Ximenes, whose superiour genius, instead of decaying as he advanced in years, seemed to recover new strength.” “ No flattery, friend,” said he, interrupting me, “ I know I may sink all at once. People at my age begin to feel infirmities ; and the infirmities of the body impair the mind. I repeat it once more, Gil Blas, as soon as ever you shall judge my senses to be declining, give me immediate notice of it ; do not fear being too free and sincere ; I shall receive this admonition as a mark of your affection for me. Besides, your interest is concerned therein ; if, unluckily for you, I should hear that they say in the city my discourses have no longer their usual energy, and that I ought to take my rest, I declare fairly to you, that you will lose both my friendship, and the fortune I have promised you ; this would be the fruits of your foolish discretion.”

My patron stopped here, to hear my answer, which was a promise to do as he desired. From that time he concealed nothing from me, and I became
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his favourite. All the domestics, except Melchior de la Ronda, could not perceive it without envy. It was a thing worth seeing, to observe the manner in which the gentlemen and masters of the horse lived with his Grace's confident. They were not ashamed to cringe to get into my favour; I could hardly believe they were Spaniards. However I did not fail to do them services, without falling a victim to their selfish civilities. The archbishop, at my desire, made use of his interest for them. He got a company for one, and put him in a way to make a figure in the army. He sent another to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable place which he procured him; and, as for my friend Melchior, I obtained a handsome gratuity for him. I found by this, that, if the prelate did not prevent them in his grants, at least he seldom refused what was asked of him.

But what I did for a priest I think deserves to be recounted. One day our steward brought me a certain licentiate, whose name was *Lewis Garcias*, a young man of a very good mien: "Signior Gil Blas," said he, "this honest ecclesiastic is one of my best friends; he has been chaplain to a convent of nuns, whence his character has not escaped slander. In short, they have blackened him so to his Grace, that he has suspended him, and unfortunately he is so much prejudiced against him, that he will not give ear to any solicitations in his favour. We have in vain employed persons of the first rank in Grenada to get him re-established; our master is inflexible."

"Gentlemen," replied I, "here is an affair very wrongly managed; they had better have spared their solicitations for Mr. Licentiate; they have done him an ill office, in endeavouring to serve him. I know his Grace; intreaties and recommendations only aggravate a clergyman's fault in his opinion. It is not long since I heard him say,
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the more a priest, who has been irregular, engages persons to intercede for him, the more it increases the scandal, and I am the more inexorable. "This is unfortunate," said the steward, "and my friend would be very much at a nonplus, if he did not write a good hand. Fortunately for him, he writes to perfection, and by that means he extricates himself from trouble." I was desirous to see whether his writing, which was so much extolled, was better than mine; whereupon Mr. Licentiate, who had some about him, shewed it me, and I admired it; it seemed to me a copy of a great master's. Upon viewing so fine a hand, a thought came into my head; I begged Garcias to leave the paper with me, telling him it might be of some service to him; that I would not explain myself any farther then, but the next day I would tell him more. The licentiate (who undoubtedly had heard my genius very much cried up by the steward), withdrew as well satisfied as if he had been already reinstated in his function.

I had indeed a mind he should be so; and that very day I attempted it, after the following manner. Being alone with the archbishop, I shewed him Garcias's writing; my patron seemed charmed with it: then, taking hold of that opportunity, I said to him: "My Lord, since you will not suffer your homilies to be printed, I could at least wish that they were written in such a hand as this." "I am satisfied with your writing," replied the prelate; "but I confess that I should not be sorry to have a copy of my works in this hand." "Your Grace," answered I, "need only speak; the person who writes so finely is a licentiate of my acquaintance. He will be the more joyful at being so employed, because he will hope by that means to prevail upon your goodness to extricate him from the difficulties wherein he is at present intangled."

The prelate asked what was the licentiate's name.

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“He is called *Lewis Garcias*,” replied I; “he is almost desperate at having incurred your displeasure.” “This Garcias,” said he, interrupting me, “if I am not mistaken, was chaplain to a nunnery; he is fallen under the censure of the church; I remember the representations that have been made to me against him; his behaviour has not been very good.” “My Lord,” said I, interrupting him in my turn, “I will not undertake to justify him; but I know he has enemies. He pretends, that the authors of the accounts you have of him, have taken more pains to do him ill offices, than to represent the truth.” “That may be,” replied the archbishop, “there are persons in the world of a dangerous temper. Besides, granting his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented, and in short one ought to forgive all offences: bring the licentiate to me; I take off the suspension.”

Thus persons of the greatest severity will abate something of it, when it is contrary to their dearer interest: the archbishop willingly granted, for the vain pleasure of having his works well written, what he had refused to the solicitations of men of the first rank. I immediately carried the news to the steward, who informed his friend Garcias of it. The next day the licentiate came to thank me proportionably to the favour I had obtained him. I presented him to my master, who contented himself with giving him a slight reprimand, and gave him his homilies to write over fair. Garcias acquitted himself so well of his commission, that he was reinstated in his ministry; and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighbourhood of Grenada.

C H A P. IV.

The archbishop falls into an apoplexy. The perplexity Gil Blas is in, and the manner he extricates himself.

WHILST I was thus doing service to one or another, Don Fernando de Leyva was preparing to leave Grenada. I went to visit him before his departure, to thank him anew for the excellent post he had procured me; I seemed so well satisfied, that he said to me, "My dear Gil Blas, I am glad you are so well pleased with my uncle the archbishop." "I am charmed with him," (replied I); "he shews such goodness for me, that I can never sufficiently acknowledge it. Nothing else could have comforted me for being separated from Don Cæsar and his son." "I am persuaded," (said he), "that they are also both concerned at having lost you; but perhaps you are not separated for ever; fortune may one day bring you again together." I could not hear these words without being moved; I sighed, and I found at that instant that I loved Don Alphonso so well, that I should willingly have quitted the archbishop and all my fine expectations, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that had removed me were taken away. Don Fernando perceived the trouble I was in, and took it so kindly, that he embraced me, and told me, that the whole family would always concern themselves for my welfare.

Two months after this cavalier was gone, whilst I was in the height of my favour, we had a terrible alarm at the archi-episcopal palace: his Grace was seized with an apoplexy. He was relieved so speedily, and such sovereign remedies were applied, that in a few days there was no more sign of it. But his head received a terrible shock; I observed it the first sermon he composed. Nevertheless the differ-

ence was not so great between that and his other works, as to enable me to conclude that the orator flagged. I waited yet for another homily, to know better what I was to think. O! as for that, it put it beyond question. At one time the good prelate tautogised; at another he soared too high, or sunk too low. It was a long winded oration, the rhetoric of a worn out school-master, a mere capucinate.

I was not the only one who took notice of it; most part of the auditors (as if they likewise had been retained to examine it), whispered to each other, as he was delivering it, "This sermon smells strongly of the apoplexy." Hereupon I said to myself, "Come Mr. Arbiter of the homilies, prepare to do your office; you see my Lord flags; you ought to apprize him of it, not only as being his confident, but also for fear some of his friends should be frank enough to prevent you therein. If that should happen, you know what would be your fate; you will be blotted out of his will, where without doubt there is a better legacy for you, than the library of the Licentiate Sedillo.

After these reflections, I made others quite contrary. The part I was to act seemed to me very ticklish. I judged that an author, who was opinionated of his own works, might receive such an information but coldly; but, rejecting this thought, I represented to myself, that it was impossible he should take it ill, after having exacted it of me after so pressing a manner. Besides this, I relied upon my speaking to him with address, and thought to gild the pill so well as to make him swallow it. In short, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence, than in breaking it, I resolved upon the latter.

I was now only perplexed about one thing; I did not know how to break the ice. Happily for me the orator himself assisted me at this plunge, by asking

asking me what the world said of him, and if they were pleased with his last discourse. I replied that they always admired his homilies; but that I thought the hearers were not so much affected with the last, as with the others. "How, friend," says he with some surprise, "had they * an Aristarchus amongst them?" "No, my Lord," answered I, "no; such works as yours are not to be criticised; there was nobody but what was charmed with it. However, since you have charged me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse does not seem to have the energy of the rest. Are not you of the same opinion yourself?"

These words made my master turn pale; he said to me with a forced smile, "What, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece then is not to your taste?" "I do not say so, Sir," interrupted I, quite in a confusion; "I think it excellent, though a little inferior to your other works." "I understand you," replied he, "I seem to flag; don't I? Speak the word out. You believe it is high time for me to think of retiring." "I should not have been so bold," answered I, "to have spoken so freely, if your Grace had not commanded me. I only do it in obedience to you, and I humbly beg your Grace not to take my boldness amiss." "God forbid," interrupted he with precipitation, "God forbid that I should reproach you with it. I do not take it at all ill that you tell me your opinion; I only think your opinion erroneous. I have been prodigiously deceived in your narrow understanding."

Though I was confounded, I would have found some expedient to qualify matters; but what way is there to pacify an exasperated author? and more, an author who is used to hear himself praised? "Speak no more, friend," said he, "you are too young yet to distinguish truth from falsehood. Know that I never composed a finer homily, than

* A great critic.

that which you do not approve of. My understanding, thank heaven, has as yet lost nothing of its vigour. For the future, I will chuse my confidants better ; I will have those who are abler judges. Go," continues he, thrusting me out of the closet by the shoulders, " go tell my treasurer to pay you an hundred ducats ; and Heaven direct you with that sum. Farewell, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you all manner of prosperity with a little better taste."

CHAP. V.

What course Gil Blas took after the archbishop dismissed him. By what accident he met the licentiate who was so much obliged to him : and what proofs of his gratitude he gave him.

I WENT out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness of the archbishop, being more enraged at him, than vexed at losing his favour. I was even some time in doubt whether I should take the hundred ducats ; but, after having thought well upon it, I was not such a fool as not to do it. I believed, that the money would not deprive me of the right to ridicule my prelate ; which I resolved in myself not to fail of, every time his homilies should be mentioned in my presence.

I went then to the treasurer to demand the hundred ducats, without saying one word to him of what had passed between his master and me. After this I looked for Melchior de la Ronda, to take my eternal leave of him. He loved me too well not to be sensible of my misfortune. Whilst I was relating it to him, I observed that grief made an impression upon his face. In spite of the respect he owed the archbishop, he could not forbear blaming him ; but, as I swore in my passion to make the prelate pay for it, and to divert the whole city at his expense, the wise Melchior said to me, " Be

ruled by me, dear Gil Blas ; rather stifle your chagrin. Men of an inferior rank ought always to respect persons of quality, whatever reason they may have to complain of them. I grant that there are many weak noblemen, who do not deserve to have the least respect paid them ; but, since it is in their power to hurt us, we ought to fear them."

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, and promised to take it. After this he said to me, " If you go to Madrid, make a visit to my nephew Joseph Navarro. He is clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and I dare venture to tell you, that he is a young man deserving of your friendship. He is free, lively, officious, and willing to anticipate you in his services ; I wish you may be acquainted together." I told him that I would not fail going to see Joseph Navarro, as soon as ever I should come to Madrid, whither I thought of returning. After this, I left the archbishop's, never to set foot in it again. If I had then had my horse, perhaps I should have gone directly for Toledo ; but I had sold it during the time of my favour, thinking I had no further need of it. I hired a ready-furnished chamber, taking a resolution to stay yet a month at Grenada, and after that to go to the Count de Polan.

As it was almost dinner-time, I asked my landlady if there was never an eating-house thereabouts. She answered, that there was an excellent one but two steps from her house, where one was well served, and a great many honest gentlemen frequented. I made her shew it me, and was soon there. I entered into a great hall, pretty much like a refectory, where ten or twelve men were sitting at a long table covered with a dirty cloth, and were entertaining themselves with each their little mess. They brought me mine, which at another time would undoubtedly have made me regret the table I had just lost. But I was then so nettled at the

archbishop,

archbishop, that the frugality at the eating-house seemed preferable to the good entertainment I met with there. I found fault with the number of dishes that were at each meal, and, arguing like the doctor of Valladolid, I said, "A mischief on those who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must be continually upon one's guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading one's stomach. How little soever one eats, is it not always sufficient?" I went on, and in my ill humour praised those aphorisms which I had very much neglected till then.

Whilst I was dispatching my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the Licentiate Lewis Garcias (become curate of Gabia after the manner before-mentioned), entered the hall. The minute he perceived me, he came and saluted me with an eager air, or rather he gave me all the demonstrations of a man that is surprised with an excessive joy. He clasped me in his arms, and I was forced to endure a tedious compliment upon the service I had done him. He fatigued me in showing himself over grateful, and, placing himself by me, said, "Good God! my dear patron, since my good fortune has brought us together, we will not part without drinking. But, as there is no good wine in this house, I will carry you, if you please, after our short commons, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of the best Lucena, and with some exquisite muscadine of Poncarrel. We must make this debauch. Why am not I so happy as to have your company some days at my living at Gabia? You should be received there like a generous Mæcenas, to whom I am indebted for the easy and quiet life I lead there."

Whilst he was thus talking, they brought him his mess, and he set down to eating, yet not without saying something flattering between whiles. I took that time to speak in my turn; and, as he did not forget to ask after his friend the steward, I

made no secret to him of my quitting the archbishop's. I told him even to the least circumstances of my disgrace, which he listened to very attentively. After what he had just been saying to me, who would not have expected to have found him overwhelmed with a grateful concern, and heard him exclaim against the archbishop? but it was what he had no thoughts on. He became cold and pensive, finished his dinner without speaking one word, then rising hastily, saluted me with a cool air, and vanished. The ungrateful wretch, seeing it no longer in my power to serve him, would not so much as take the trouble to conceal his sentiments from me. I only laughed at his ingratitude, and, looking upon him with all the contempt he deserved, I called after him in a voice loud enough to be heard, "Holla, you discreet Mr. Chaplain to the Nunery, go and cool the delicious Lucena wine to which you have invited me."

CHAP. VI.

Gil Blas goes to see a comedy at Grenada. How he was surpris'd at the sight of one of the actresses, and what ensued.

GARCIAS was hardly out of the hall, when there entered two cavaliers, very well dressed, who came and sat down by me. They began to discourse of the company of comedians at Grenada, and of a new comedy that was then acted. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the town. I had an inclination to go and see it that very night. I had never been at the playhouse since I came to Grenada. As I had almost always kept at the archbishop's, where that diversion was excommunicated, I took care to deprive myself of that pleasure. The homilies had made all my amusement.

I went then at the usual time to the playhouse, where

where I found a numerous audience. I heard all around me busied in making remarks upon the play before it began, and I observed that every body pretended to criticise upon it. One declared himself for, another against it. "Did you ever see a piece better written?" says one on my right. "What a miserable style it is?" cried another on my left. In effect, if there are a great many bad authors, it must be confessed there are yet more wretched critics. And when I think on the hardships the dramatic poets have to undergo, I wonder any one has courage enough to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of the half-wits, who sometimes corrupt the taste of the public.

In short, the Gracioso appeared to open the scene, and was received with a general clapping of hands; which made me know, that he was one of those spoiled actors whom the pit forgives every thing. In effect, this comedian did not speak a word, nor make a motion but what was applauded. They let me see too plain the pleasure they took in his appearance; accordingly he abused it. I perceived that he forgot himself sometimes upon the stage, and put their prepossession in his favour to too great a trial. If they had hissed him instead of extolling him, they would often have done him but justice.

They clapped their hands also at the sight of some other actors, and particularly an actress who played the part of a servant. I fixed my eyes upon her; and no terms can express my surprize, when I found her to be Laura, my dear Laura, whom I thought still at Madrid with Arsenia. I could not doubt of its being her. Her shape, her features, the tone of her voice, all assured me I was not mistaken. However, as if I had been diffident of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier that sat by me. "Ha," says he, "what country came

came you from? You must certainly be but newly arrived, since you do not know the fair Estella."

The likeness was too great for me to be deceived therein. I easily comprehended, that Laura, in altering her condition, had also changed her name; and being curious to know her affairs (for the public is never ignorant of those of the players), I enquired of the same person, if this Estella had any lover of consequence: he informed me, that a great Portuguese nobleman, called the *Marquis de Mariatua*, who was at Grenada, had, for two months past, spent a great deal of money upon her. He would have told me more, if I had not been afraid of tiring him with questions. I was more taken up with the news this gentleman had told me, than with the comedy; and had any one asked me the subject of the play, I should have been puzzled for an answer. I did nothing but muse upon Laura and Estella, and I resolved upon going to see that actress next morning. I was not without apprehensions about what reception she would give me; I had reason to think my sight would not be very agreeable, in the splendid state wherein her affairs then were: I even imagined that such a good actress, in revenge to a man with whom certainly she had some reason to be dissatisfied, might pretend not to know him. All this did not discourage me; for having made a slender supper (they made no other at my eating-house), I went home to my chamber, very impatient for the next day.

I slept but little that night, and got up at break of day. But as I imagined the mistress of a great nobleman would not be seen so early in the morning, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming myself. I was willing to appear before her in a condition which need not make her blush to see me again. I went out about ten o'clock, going directly to her, after having inquired her lodging at the playhouse. She lodged

in a large house, where she had the first floor. I told a chambermaid who came to open the door, that I was a young man that wanted to speak with the Lady Estella. The chambermaid went in to carry the message, to which I heard her mistress immediately answer with a loud voice, "Who is the young man? What does he want with me? Let him come in."

I judged thereby that I had taken an improper time; that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet; and that she only spoke so loud, to convince him that she was not a woman who would receive suspicious messages. My thoughts were true, the Marquis de Marialva spent almost every morning with her. I expected a coarse compliment, when this original of an actress, seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying, "Ah, my dear brother, is it you that I see?" At which words she embraced me several times. Then turning to the Portuguese nobleman, she said, "Pardon me, my Lord, if in your presence I yield to the force of nature; I cannot see a brother, whom I tenderly love, after three years absence, without giving him some proofs of my affection." "Well, my dear Gil Blas," continued she, addressing herself again to me, "tell me some news of our family, in what condition have you left them?"

This discourse perplexed me at first, but I soon discovered Laura's design, and seconding her artifice, I answered with an air suitable to the farce we were both going to play. "Thank heaven, sister, our parents are in good health." "I do not doubt," replied she, "but you are surprised at seeing me an actress at Grenada; but do not condemn me without hearing. You know it is three years since my father thought he had settled me very advantageously, in giving me to Capt. Don Antonio Cœlo, who carried me from Asturia to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after we were arrived there,

he fought a duel, which he brought upon himself by his violent humour. He killed a cavalier, who thought fit to take a fancy to me : the cavalier was related to some persons of quality, who had a great deal of credit. My husband having none, made his escape into Catalonia, with all the jewels and ready money that was in the house. He embarked at Barcelona, went over into Italy, and entering into the Venetian service, lost at last his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks. During this, an estate, the only one we had to trust to, was confiscated, and I became one of the poorest of widows. What should I do in such an extremity ? There was no way for me to return into Asturia ; besides, what should I have done there ? All the comfort I should have received from my family would have been condolences. On the other hand, I had been too well brought up, to be capable of falling into debauchery. What course then should I resolve on ? I turned actress to preserve my reputation ?”

I had so great an inclination to laugh when I heard Laura end her romance thus, that it was no small trouble to me to stifle it : however, I did conquer myself, and said, with a grave tone : “ Sister, I approve of your conduct, and am glad to find you so well settled at Grenada.”

The Marquis de Marialva, who had not lost a word of this discourse, took every thing that Don Antonio's widow was pleased to say for gospel. He even made one in the dialogue. He asked me if I had any employment at Grenada, or elsewhere. I was a minute in doubt whether I should tell him a lie ; but not thinking that necessary, I spoke the truth. I told him succinctly how I was hired at the archbishop's, and how I came to be dismissed, which diverted the Portuguese nobleman infinitely.

It is true, in spite of my promise to Melchior, I did rally a little at the archbishop's expense. What was pleasantest in it was, that Laura, imagining that

I com-

I composed a fable after her example, burst out into fits of laughter; which she would not have done, had she known that I spoke the truth.

Having finished my recital, by telling where I had hired a chamber, they came to bring word that dinner was ready, wherefore I would have immediately withdrawn to my eating-house, but Laura stopt me, "What do you mean, brother?" said she. "You shall dine with me; I will not even suffer you to lodge any longer in a ready-furnished chamber; I intend you shall eat at my house, and that you shall lie here. Order your things to be brought hither to night; here is a bed for you."

At this the Portuguese, who perhaps was not pleased with this hospitality, resumed the speech, and said to Laura: "No, Estella, you are not lodged commodiously enough to give any one a reception with you. Your brother," continues he, "seems to me a pretty fellow; and the advantage he has of being related to you, makes me concern myself for his welfare. I will take him into my service: he shall be my favourite secretary. I will make him my confidant; let him not fail of coming this night to my house. I will order a lodging for him, I will give him four hundred ducats a year salary; and if in the end I have reason (as I hope I shall) to be satisfied with him, I will put him into a condition not to repent of his having been too sincere with the archbishop."

The thanks I returned thereupon to the Marquis, were followed by those of Laura, which surpassed mine. "Say no more of it," interrupted he, "it is a done thing." This said, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went out. She immediately made me go into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me, "I shall burst," she cried, "if I any longer resist the inclination I have to laugh." Then throwing herself into an elbow chair, and holding her sides, she gave herself up like a fool to immoderate

derate laughter. It was impossible for me not to follow her example, and when we had had our fill: "Confess, Gil Blas," said she, "that we have just played a pleasant farce; but I did not expect such a catastrophe. I only designed to secure you a table, and a lodging in my house; and it was in order to offer you them with decency, that I made you pass for my brother: however, I am overjoyed that chance has preferred you to so good a post. The Marquis de Marialva is a generous nobleman, who will do yet more for you than he has promised. Any other than myself," continued she, "would not perhaps have received a man so graciously, who leaves his friends without taking leave of them: but I am one of those good-natured girls who are always glad to see again a rogue they have once loved."

I honestly confessed my incivility, and asked her pardon; after which she conducted me into a very handsome dining-room. We sat down to table; and as a chambermaid and a footman waited upon us, we called each other brother and sister. When we had dined, we went again into the same closet, where we had entertained each other before. There my incomparable Laura, giving herself up to all her natural gaiety, asked me an account of all that had happened, since our separation. I made her a faithful recital; and when I had satisfied her curiosity, she likewise complied with me, by recounting to me her history, in the following terms.

C H A P. VII.

The history of Laura.

I Am going to relate, as succinctly as possible by what chance I became a comedian.

After you had left me so civilly, several considerable adventures befel us. My mistress Arsenia, being more fatigued with the world than disgusted

with

with it, abjured the theatre, and carried me with her to a fine estate she had purchased near Zamora, with the money of foreigners. We soon had several acquaintance in that city, whither we went very often, and spent a day or two, after which we returned and shut ourselves up in our castle.

In one of these little journeys, Don Felix Maldonado, only son to the corregidor of Zamora, had a sight of me by chance, and I had the luck to please him. He sought an opportunity of speaking to me without witness, and not to conceal any thing from you, I contributed a little to his finding one. This cavalier was but twenty years old: he was as handsome as the god of love, perfectly well-shaped, and yet more inviting in his gallant and generous behaviour than in his person. He offered me a large brilliant he had upon his finger, with such a good grace, and so much importunity, that I could not excuse myself from accepting it. I had not much joy in having so amiable a gallant. But what imprudence is it in girls of my humble condition, to engage in an affair with young men of quality, whose parents are in power. The corregidor, who was the most severe even of any in that post, being informed of our intelligence, made haste to prevent the consequences: he had me carried off by a company of alguazils, who, in spite of my tears, conducted me to the hospital de la Pitié.

There, without any other form of process, the superior made me take off my ring and cloaths, and dressed me in a long gown of grey serge, girt about the middle by a large black leather thong, from whence a rosary with large beads hung down to my heels. After this they led me into a hall, where I found an old friar, of I do not know what order, who began to preach repentance to me, almost as Dame Leonarda exhorted you to patience in the cave. He told me that I was very much obliged to the persons who had confined me; that they had
done:

done me a great service in drawing me out of the snares of the devil. I will confess my ingratitude freely: far from thinking myself indebted to those who had done me that kindness, I loaded them with imprecations.

I spent eight days in giving myself up to despair, but on the ninth (for I counted even the minutes) my fortune seemed inclinable to change. As I was crossing a little court, I met with the steward of the house, a person to whom every thing was in subjection; the superiour herself was forced to obey him; he only gave an account of his stewardship to the corregidor, on whom alone he depended, and who reposed an entire confidence in him. His name was *Pedro Zendono*, born at the town of Sellefdon in Biscay. Imagine to yourself, a tall, pale, meagre man; one who might serve for a model whereby to draw the good thief: he hardly seemed to take any notice of the sisters; you never saw so hypocritical a face, not though you have lived at the archbishop's.

I met then, continued she, Signior Zendono, who stopped me with these words: "Comfort yourself, child, I am touched with your misfortunes." He said no more, but went on his way, leaving me to make what comments I pleased upon a text so laconic. As I believed him an honest man, I thought ingenuously that he had taken the pains to examine into the cause of my confinement; and that not finding me culpable enough to deserve being treated with so much indignity, he was willing to do me some service with the corregidor. I did not know the Biscayner well enough; his intentions were quite different; he was forming in his head a design to take a journey, which he imparted to me a few days after. "My dear Laura," said he, "I am so sensible of your sufferings, that I am resolved to put an end to them. I am not ignorant that it is ruining myself, but I am no longer

er my own master. I intend to morrow to release you from your prison, and conduct you myself to Madrid; I will sacrifice all to the pleasure of being your deliverer."

I thought I should have swooned for joy at these words of Zendono, who judging by my thankfulness that I desired no better than to make my escape, had the assurance to carry me off the next day, in the face of the sun, after the manner following. He told the superiour that he had orders to carry me to the corregidor, who was at a country seat two leagues from the city; and he made me impudently get with him into a post-chaise, drawn by two good mules, which he had bought on purpose. All our attendants were only one servant, who drove the chaise, and was entirely devoted to the steward. We began then to travel; not towards Madrid, as I had imagined, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, where we got in less time than the corregidor of Zamora could be informed of our flight, and send his blood-hounds to trace us.

Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayner made me dress myself in a cavalier's habit, which he had the precaution to bring with him; and thinking me already engaged with him, he spoke thus to me, at the inn where we were going to lodge. "Fair Laura, do not take it ill of me that I have brought you into Portugal; the corregidor of Zamora will pursue us in our own country, like two criminals to whom Spain ought to afford no refuge: but," continued he, "we may be secure from his resentment in this foreign kingdom, although it be now subjected to the Spanish government. At least we shall be more in safety here, than in our own country: follow a man who adores you: let us go and settle at Coimbra: there I will get to be a spy to the holy office; and, under covert of that formidable

able tribunal, we shall pass our days in the quiet enjoyment of all manner of pleasures.

So brisk a proposal gave me to understand that I had to do with a knight-errant, who did not care to serve as a guide to distressed damsels, only for the glory of chivalry. I found that he depended mightily upon my gratitude, and yet more upon my misfortunes. However, though both these things spoke in his favour, I rejected his offer with disdain. It is true I had on my side two very strong reasons for seeming so reserved; I found in myself no liking to him, and I did not believe him rich. But upon his making a second attack, and proffering first to marry me, together with shewing me that his stewardship had considerably enriched him, I will not deny but I began to hearken to him. I was dazzled with the gold and jewels which he displayed before me; and I experienced that interest could make metamorphoses, as well as love. My Biscayner by little and little became another man in my eyes. His lean long sides were turned to a fine shape; his pale phiz seemed of a lovely white; and I even put a favourable construction upon his hypocritical air. I then accepted of his hand without repugnance, before Heaven, which he took to witness our engagement. After this he no longer met with any contradiction from me; we set forward again on our journey, and Coimbra soon received a new family within its walls.

My husband bought me several handsome suits of cloaths, and presented me with divers diamonds, among which I again knew that of Don Felix Maldonado. This was enough for me to guess whence came all the jewels I had seen, and to persuade me that I had not married a rigid observer of the seventh article of the decalogue. But looking upon myself as the first cause of his legerdemain, I forgave him. A woman excuses even the ill actions which are occasioned by her beauty. Without that
what

what a wicked wretch would he have seemed to me ?

I was very well satisfied with him for two or three months; his behaviour was always gallant, and he seemed to love me tenderly: nevertheless the marks he gave me of his affection, were but false appearances; the villain tricked me. One morning, at my return from mass, I found nothing at home but the bare walls. The goods, even to my cloaths, had been all carried off. Zendonio and his faithful servant had taken their measures so well, that the house was entirely stripped in less than an hour. Insomuch that I saw myself (with only the cloaths I had on, and Don Felix's ring which I luckily wore on my finger) abandoned by an ungrateful wretch, like another Ariadne. But I will assure you I did not amuse myself in making elegies upon my misfortune. I rather thanked Heaven for having delivered me from a miscreant who could not fail, sooner or later, of falling into the hands of justice. I looked upon the time we had lived together as so much time lost, which I should not be long in recovering. If I would have staid in Portugal, and settled with some woman of quality, I might have found several; but whether it was the love to my country, or whether I was drawn by the influence of my stars, which were preparing me a better fortune there, my mind ran only upon returning into Spain. I addressed myself to a jeweller, who paid me down the value of my ring in gold; and I set out with an old Spanish lady, who was going to Seville in a calash.

This lady, whose name was *Dorothea*, had been to visit one of her relations who was settled at Coimbra, and was returning to Seville, where she resided. There was such a sympathy between us, that we took a fancy to each other the first day's journey; and our friendship increased so much upon the road, that, at our arrival, she would not
suffer

suffer me to lodge any where but at her house, I had no reason to repent of having got such an acquaintance; I never knew a woman of a better character. One might yet judge, by her features, and the liveliness of her eyes, that she had caused a great many serenades. Accordingly she had been a widow to several men of quality. and lived honourably upon her jointures.

Among other excellent qualities, she was very sensible of the misfortunes of young women. When I made her the recital of mine, she espoused my interests so heartily, that she bestowed a thousand execrations upon Zondono. "Those rogues of men!" said she, in a tone that made me judge she had met some steward of a nunnery in her way; "those wretches! there are in the world just such a set of villains, who make a jest of ruining women. What comforts me, my dear," continued she, "is, that, by your account, you are nowise tied to the perjured biscayner. If your marriage with him is good enough to serve you for an excuse, to make amends. it is also bad enough to allow you to contract a better when occasion offers."

I went every day either to church with Dorothea, or else a visiting, which was the way to meet soon with some adventure. I drew the eyes of several cavaliers, and there were some who were willing to sound me: they had spoken to my old landlady; but the one were not able to defray the expenses of a settlement, and others were not yet come to man's estate, which was sufficient to deter me from hearkening to them. One day Dorothea and I took a fancy to see a play acted by the comedians of Seville: they had posted up La Famosa Comedia: El Embaxodor de Si-mismo, composed by Lopez de Vega Carpio.

Amongst the actresses that appeared upon the stage, I found one of my old acquaintance. I discovered Phenice, that merry gipsy, whom you
knew

knew chambermaid to Florimonda, and with whom you have supped sometimes at Arsenia's. I knew very well, that Phenice had been two years out of Madrid ; but I did not know that she was an actress. I was so impatient to embrace her, that I thought the play very long. Perhaps also it was the fault of the actors, who neither played well nor ill enough to amuse me ; for to me who laugh at any thing, I own that an actor who is perfectly ridiculous, diverts me no less than one who excels in his profession.

In fine, the wished-for hour being come, that is to say, the end of the *Famosa Comedia*, the widow and I went behind the scenes, where we soon discovered Phenice playing the fine lady, and listening with all the coquetry imaginable to the soft courtship of a young spark, who without doubt had suffered himself to be enchanted with the charms of her utterance. As soon as she had observed me, she left him with a gracious smile, and, coming to me with open arms, received me with all the compliments in the world. We expressed mutually a great deal of joy at meeting again ; but, the time and the place not allowing us to enlarge further, we deferred till the next morning our design of entertaining each other more amply.

The pleasure of talking is one of the most predominant passions in womankind. I could not close my eyes all night, so great was my inclination to engage with Phenice, and ask her question upon question. Heaven knows whether I was lazy in rising and going to the place where she told me she lived. She lodged with the rest of the company, in a large house ready-furnished. I met a servant at the entrance, and prayed her to shew me Phenice's apartment, whereupon she led me up into a corridor, along which were ten or twelve little chambers, separated only by partitions of deal boards, which were taken up by the merry crew. My guide
knocked

knocked at a door, which was soon opened by Phenice, whose tongue itched as much as mine. We hardly gave ourselves time to sit down for chatting. We now were in a fair way to have our fill ; and we had so many things to ask each other, that the questions and answers succeeded one another with a surprising volubility.

Having mutually recounted our adventures, and informed each other of our present condition, Phenice inquired what I resolved to do. I answered her, that I intended, till I could provide myself better, to wait upon some young lady of quality. " Fie," said my friend, " sure you do not think of it. Is it possible, my girl, that you are not yet disgusted with service? are not you tired with being subject to the will of others? of paying a regard to their caprices? of hearing yourself chid? in a word, of being a slave? Why do not you turn comedian, after my example? Nothing is more proper for persons of wit, who are neither rich nor of noble extraction. It is a middling state between the nobility and commonalty, a condition that is independent, and exempt from those punctilios that are most incommodious to society. Our revenues are paid us down by the public, who are masters of our funds. We always live merrily, and spend our money as we get it.

The play-house," continued she, " above all is favourable to women ; whilst I lived with Florimonda. (I blush to think on it), I was reduced to the necessity of giving ear to the underlings of the prince's company ; not an honest man took any notice of me. Whence came that? It was because I was not in view. The finest picture does not strike one, if it is not in a good light. But since I have been in my element, that is to say, upon the stage, what a change is there ! I see at my heels the young men of the best figure in all the cities through which we pass. The profession therefore of an actress

refs is very agreeable: If she is discreet, I mean if she entertains but one lover at a time, it does her all the credit in the world; her conduct is praised; and, when she changes her gallant, she is looked upon as a real widow that marries again. Again, the latter is despised if she takes a third husband: one would think that it shocked the mens nicety; whereas the value of the other seems to increase in proportion to the number of her favourites; after a hundred intrigues, she is a dish for a lord."

"To whom are you telling this?" said I, interrupting her here. "Do you think I am ignorant of those advantages? I have often represented them to myself, and they are but too pleasing to a girl of my character; I even find in myself an inclination to the stage; but that is not sufficient; one must have a talent, and I have none. I sometimes attempted to rehearse some parts before Arsenia, who was not at all pleased with me, which gave me a distaste to the profession." "You are not hard to be discouraged," replied Phenice; "do not you know that such great actresses are always jealous? They are afraid, (in spite of all their vanity), that somebody should come to eclipse them. In short, I will not be determined therein by Arsenia; she has not been sincere. I tell you without flattery, that you are born for the stage; you have a genius, an easy and graceful action, a soft voice, a fine chest, and with that such a look! Ah, rogue, how many cavaliers will you charm, if you turn actress?"

She said several other engaging things, and made me repeat some verses, only that I might judge myself what a fine talent I had for comedy. When she had heard me, the case was mightily altered; she extolled me to the skies, and gave me the preference of all the actresses at Madrid. After this, it would have been inexcusable in me to have doubted any longer of my merit; Arsenia stood impeached and convicted of jealousy and dishonesty. I was forced

to

to agree that I was an admirable player. Two comedians coming in at the same time, Phenice made me repeat again the same verses before them, which threw them into a kind of ecstasy; whence they no sooner recovered than they stunned me with their compliments. Without exaggerating, if they had laid a wager which of the three should cry me up most, they could not have used more hyperbolical expressions. My modesty was not proof against so many commendations; I began to think I was of some value; and thus behold my mind bent upon the stage.

“Come, my dear,” said I to Phenice, “it is done; I will follow your counsel, and enter into your company, if they approve of it.” At these words, my friend (being transported with joy) embraced me; and her two comrades did not seem less delighted than her to see me in that resolution. It was agreed, that I should come to the playhouse the next morning, and give the whole company the same specimen that I had just shown of my talent. If they had conceived an advantageous opinion of me at Phenice’s, all the comedians judged yet more favourably of me, when I had only recited twenty verses in their presence: they received me willingly into their company, after which I was only in pain for my first appearance. In order to make it with a greater *eclat*, I employed all the money that remained of my ring; and, if I had not enough to equip me sumptuously, at least I found the art to supply the want of magnificence by a genteel taste.

In short, I appeared upon the stage for the first time. What clapping of hands! What encomiums! I should be moderate, my friend, if I were only simply to say, that I ravished the audience. One must have been a witness of the noise I made at Seville. I became the entertainment of the whole city, who thronged in crowds to the comedy: so that the

the company, by this novelty, regained the public who began to forsake them.

I began then after a manner that charmed all the world ; now this was as if I had posted it up, that I was to be purchased by the best settlement and the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, ambitiously strove who should take care of me. If I had followed my inclination, I should have chosen the youngest and the handsomest : but we players ought only to consider our interest and ambition when we are about a settlement : it is a rule in the playhouse : for which reason Don Ambrosio de Nisana (a man already advanced in years, and ill-made, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia) had the preference. It is true I made him pay well for it ; he hired me a fine house, furnished it magnificently, provided me with a good man-cook, two footmen, a woman, and a thousand ducats a-month for my expenses. Add to this rich cloaths, with a considerable quantity of jewels.

What a change was here in my fortune ! My head could not bear it. I immediately appeared to myself another person. I no longer wonder if there are women, who in a little time forget the poverty and misery, from whence the caprice of some lord has extricated them. I confess sincerely to you, the applause of the public, the flattering discourse I had on all sides, and the passion of Don Ambrosio, heightened my vanity to extravagance. I looked upon my talent as equivalent to a title, and gave myself the airs of a woman of quality. And, becoming as covetous of my favourable glances, as I had been prodigal of them till then, I resolved not to cast an eye but on dukes, counts, or marquises.

Don Ambrosio came to sup with me every night, with some of his friends, and I was careful on my side to invite the most diverting of our actresses, and we spent good part of the night in laughing and drinking. Such an agreeable life agreed very well

well with me ; but it lasted but six months. Noblemen are subject to change ; were it not for that they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio left me for a young coquet of Grenada, who was just come to Seville, with some agreeableness, and wit enough to make her advantage of it. However, I did not afflict myself above four and twenty hours ; and I chose Don Lewis d'Alcacer, a cavalier of twenty-two years old, to whom few Spaniards could be compared for his good mein, to supply his place.

You will without doubt ask me, how I came to take so young a lord, I that knew the consequences ? and you have reason. But besides Don Lewis's having neither father nor mother, and being already master of his estate, these consequences are only to be apprehended by girls of a servile condition, or common street-walkers. Women of our profession are not responsible for the effects of their charms ; so much the worse for the families whose heirs we fleece.

D'Alcacer and I engaged ourselves so firmly together, that I believe never any passion equalized that wherewith we suffered ourselves to be inflamed. We both loved each other with so much violence, that it seemed as if a spell had been laid upon us. They who knew our correspondence, thought us the happiest couple in the world, and we were perhaps the most unhappy. If Don Lewis was charming in his person, he was at the same time so jealous, that he every minute made me desperate with his unjust suspicions. It signified nothing my humouring him in his weakness, or my constraining myself so much as not to look any other man in the face, his mistrust was so ingenious as to invent crimes which rendered my constraint useless. Our most tender moments were always mixed with quarrels ; it was not to be borne ; our patience was wearied out on both sides, and we parted friends. Would you believe that the last

day of our correspondence was the most agreeable of any we ever passed together? Being both equally fatigued with the evils we had suffered, nothing but joy was to be seen in our faces at our separation. We were like two miserable captives who have recovered their liberty after a hard slavery.

Ever since this adventure, I have been upon my guard against love. I will have no more engagements that disturb my rest; it is not fit for us to sigh and whine like others; we ought not to be sensible in private of a passion which we ridicule in public.

During this time fame was not idle; she had diffused it every where that I was an inimitable actress. Upon the credit of this goddess, the comedians of Grenada wrote to me to propose my entering into their company, and to convince me that it was not to be rejected, they sent me an account of their daily expenses, and their terms of agreement, whereby I found that it would be an advantageous offer. Accordingly I accepted it; although at the bottom I was sorry to leave Phenice and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as it is possible for one woman to love another. I left the first at Seville, employed in melting down the plate of a little goldsmith, who out of vanity would have an actress for a mistress. I forgot to tell you that, on turning player, I changed, out of a whim, my name of *Laura*, for that of *Estella*; and it was under that latter name that I set out for Grenada.

I made no worse a beginning here than at Seville, and I soon saw myself surrounded with admirers. But resolving not to sell my favours but at a good price, I was so reserved in my carriage that I quite blinded them. However, that I might not fall a bubble to a conduct that was neither natural to me, nor could bring me any advantage, I was about to give ear to a young Oydar, by birth a citizen, who lives like a lord by virtue of his post, and keeps a
good

good table and equipage, when I saw the Marquis de Marialva for the first time. This Portuguese nobleman travelling through Spain out of curiosity, and passing through Grenada, made it his residence for some time. He came to the playhouse; I did not happen to act that night, and he fixed his eyes very attentively upon the actresses that came upon the stage. One of them chanced to please him; he got acquainted with her the next day, and the bargain was just upon the concluding when I appeared. The sight of me, and my coquet-airs, immediately turned the scale; the Portuguese thought no longer of any one but me. To confess the truth, as I knew my companion had charmed this nobleman, I spared no pains to supplant her, and I had the good fortune to succeed. I am not ignorant that she owes me a grudge, but I cannot help it. She ought to consider that it is a thing so natural to women, that the best friends make not the least scruple of it.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the reception the comedians of Grenada gave Gil Blas, and of an old acquaintance he met behind the scenes.

THE minute Laura had finished her story, there came in an old actress, who lived in the neighbourhood, with an intent to go with her to the playhouse. This venerable heroine of the stage, had been proper to have acted the part of the goddess Cotys. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure, and thereupon great compliments ensued on both sides.

I left them together, telling Zendono's widow that I would meet her at the playhouse, as soon as I had seen my things carried to the Marquis de Marialva's, whose house she shewed me. I stepped immediately to the chamber I had hired, whence
 I (having

(having satisfied my landlady) I went with a porter, who carried my cloakbag, to a large ready-furnished house, where my new master lodged. I met with his steward at the door, who asked me if I was not Mrs. Estella's brother. I answered, "Yes," "You are welcome then, Signior Cavalier," replied he; the Marquis de Marialva, to whom I have the honour to be steward, has ordered me to receive you kindly. There is a chamber ready for you; if you please I will shew you the way to it. Upon this he carried me up to the top of the house, into a chamber so little, that a narrow bed with a cupboard, and two chairs filled it. This was my apartment. "You will not have a great deal of room here," said my guide; "but, to make amends, I promise you that you shall have a stately lodging at Lisbon." I locked up my cloakbag in the cupboard, and taking the key, I asked at what hour they supped. To this he answered, that the Marquis kept no table, but that he gave every domestic so much a-month board-wages. I asked several other questions, whereby I found that the Marquis's servants were fortunate idlers. After a short discourse, I parted with the steward in order to go again to Laura, being agreeably taken up with the advantages I promised myself in my new station.

As soon as I got to the playhouse-door, and said I was Estella's brother, every place was open to me. One might have seen the guards strive who should make way for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable persons in Grenada. All the supernumeraries, door-keepers, and under-door-keepers that I met in my way, made me low bows. But I wish I could describe to the reader the serio-comical reception I met with behind the scenes; where I found the whole company dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura presented me, rushed in swarms upon me. The men stifled me with their embraces, and the women

men in their turn, saluting me with their painted faces, plastered mine over with white and red. Not one of them would be the last to pay their compliment; they all began to speak together, and it was impossible for me alone to answer them: happily for me my sister came to my assistance, and her tongue inured to talking, did not suffer me to be behindhand with any one.

I did not come off, for the embraces of the actors and actresses: I was forced to endure the civilities of the decorators, the musicians, the prompter, the snuffer, and under snuffer of candles: in short, I was forced to run the gauntlet through all the underlings of the theatre, who ran all at the news of my arrival, to have a look at me. It seemed to me as if they had all been foundlings, who had never known what it was to have a brother.

In the mean while the play being begun, some gentlemen who were behind the scenes, went to seat themselves to hear it, and I like one of the house continued to divert myself with the actors who were not upon the stage. One of these happened to be called before me *Melchior*; the name struck me; and considering the man with attention, I thought I had seen him somewhere. At last I collected, and knew him to be Melchior Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I have said in the first volume, was dipping his crusts of bread in a spring.

I took him immediately aside, and told him, I am very much mistaken, if you are not that Signior Melchior with whom I had the honour to breakfast one morning at the side of a clear spring, between Valladolid and Segovia. I was with a young lad, a barber. We had some provision which we joined to yours, and we all three made a slight repast, which was interlarded with a thousand agreeable sayings. At these words Zapata began to muse a little; after which he replied, "You speak to me of a thing I can easily call to mind. I came then from

from acting at Madrid, and was returning to Zamora. I even remember that I was then in very bad circumstances." "I remember it likewise," answered I, "by the same token that your doublet was lined with playhouse-bills: neither have I forgot any more than you, that you then complained of having a wife who was too discreet." "O, I have no more reason to complain of that now," replied Zapata hastily. "Good God! the good woman is mightily altered from that, by the same token my doublet is better lined too."

I was going to congratulate him upon his wife's hearkening to reason, when he was obliged to leave me, to appear upon the stage. Being curious to know his wife, I went to a player to desire him to shew me her. He did so, telling me, "That is her before you, it is Narcissa, the prettiest of our actresses except your sister." I judged that this was her in whose favour the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself, before his seeing Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. After the end of the play, I conducted Laura to her lodgings, where being come, I perceived several cooks who were preparing a great entertainment. "You may sup here," said she. "By no means," replied I; "the Marquis will perhaps be glad to be alone with you." "Not at all," answered she: "He is coming hither with two of his friends, and one of our actors: it shall be your fault if you do not make the sixth. You know very well that with us players the secretaries have the privilege of dining with their masters." "That is true," said I; "but it is too soon yet to put myself upon the foot of those favourite secretaries. I must first be intrusted with the commission of a confidant to deserve that honourable prerogative." Having thus spoken, I left Laura's, and went to my eating-house, where I resolved to go every day since my master kept no table.

CHAP. IX.

What kind of a man he supped with that night, and what passed between them.

I Observed in the hall a sort of an old monk clothed in gray bays, who supped in a corner by himself. I went out of curiosity, and sat over-against him, saluting him very civilly, neither did he seem a whit less polite than I. They brought me my pittance, which I began to dispatch with great alacrity. Whilst I was thus eating without speaking a word, I often looked upon my neighbour, whose eyes I always found fixed upon me. Being vexed with his continual staring upon me, I addressed myself thus to him: "Father, do you think you have ever seen me any where before? You eye me like a man who is not entirely unknown to you."

He answered me gravely: "If I fix my eyes upon you, it is only to admire the prodigious variety of adventures that are delineated in the features of your face." "By what I perceive," said I to him in a rallying tone, "your reverence understands metoposcopy." "I may boast of being master of it," replied the monk; "and of having made some predictions, which have not been contradicted by the sequel. I am not less versed in chiromancy, and I dare venture to say that my oracles are infallible, when I have compared the lines of the hand with those of the physiognomy."

Although this old father had altogether the appearance of a man of sense, I thought him so foolish, that I could not forbear laughing full in his face. Instead of being offended at my rudeness, he smiled at it, and pursued his discourse in these terms, having first looked round the hall, and assured himself that nobody heard us. "I am not surprised at seeing you so prepossessed against two sciences, that
are

are now thought trifling; the tedious and laborious study which they require, discourages all the learned, who renounce and decry them for mere spite, in that they have not been able to make themselves masters of them. As for me, I was not disheartened at the obscurity wherein they are involved, no more than at the difficulties that incessantly attend the search of chymical secrets, and the stupendous art of the transmutation of metals into gold.

But I forget," continued he, recollecting himself, "that I am talking to a young gentleman, to whom my discourses must in reality pass only for dreams. A specimen of my skill will incline you to judge favourably of me, more than all that I can say." At these words, he drew out of his pocket a vial full of liquor of a vermilion colour; after which he said to me, "Here is an elixir I composed this morning, of the juices of certain plants distilled in the alembic; for I have spent almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of simples and minerals. You shall experience its virtue. The wine we have been drinking at our supper is very bad; this shall make it excellent. At the same time, he put two drops of his elixir in my bottle, which rendered my wine more delicious than the most exquisite that is drank in Spain.

Any thing wonderful strikes the imagination; and when that is once touched, one makes no more use of one's judgment. Charmed with such a fine secret, and being persuaded that he must be more than a devil to be master of such an art, I cried out full of admiration, O my father, I beg your pardon for taking you at first for an old fool. I now do justice to your great capacity. I have no need of seeing any more, to be convinced that if you pleased you could make an ingot of gold of a bar of iron. How happy should I be if I were possessed of such an admirable science. "Heaven preserve you from it!" (cried the old man, fetching a

deep sigh). "You do not know, my son, what a dangerous thing you have wished. Instead of envying me, you ought rather to pity me for having taken so much pains to make myself miserable. I am in a continual disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered, and of having a perpetual prison for the reward of my labour. Full of these apprehensions I lead a rambling life, disguised sometimes like a priest or friar, and sometimes like a cavalier, or peasant. Is it then an advantage how to make gold at that price? And are not riches a real punishment to those who cannot enjoy them quietly?"

"These sentiments appear to me very reasonable," replied I to the philosopher; "nothing is to be compared to a quiet life; you have given me a disgust to the philosopher's stone; I will satisfy myself with learning from you what will befall me." "With all my heart, child," answered he; "I have already made observations upon your features, now let me see your hand." I shewed it him with a confidence that will do me no honour in the opinion of some readers. He examined it with attention; after which he said in a rapture: "What transitions are here from sorrow to joy, and from joy to sorrow! What an odd succession of disgraces, and good fortune! But you have already experienced great part of these alternatives: you have no more misfortunes to undergo; and a nobleman will provide you an agreeable settlement that will not be liable to change."

Having assured me that I might rely upon this prediction, he took his leave, and went out of the eating-house, where I staid behind very full of what I had just been hearing. I did not at all doubt but the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman mentioned; and consequently nothing seemed more probable than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of it, it would not have hindered my giving an entire credit

credit to the counterfeit monk, he had gained for much authority over me by his elixir. On the other hand, that I might forward the good fortune that was foretold me, as much as lay in my power, I resolved to be more diligent in my attendance on the Marquis, than I had ever been to any of my masters. Having taken this resolution, I retired to our hotel with a gaiety not to be expressed; never did any woman go away better satisfied from a fortune-teller.

C H A P. X.

Of the commission the Marquis de Marialva gave to Gil Blas, and how that faithful secretary discharged it.

THE Marquis was not yet come back from his actreses, and I found his valets de chambre in his apartment playing at *primero*, in expectation of his return. I got acquainted with them, and we diverted ourselves with laughing till two in the morning, when our master came home. He was a little surpris'd at the sight of me, and said with a gracious air, which made me judge that he was very well satisfied with his spending the evening: "How, Gil Blas, are not you in bed yet?" I answered, that I was willing first to know whether he had any commands for me. "I shall perhaps have a commission for you to-morrow morning," replied he; "but it will be time enough then to inform you of it: go to rest; and for the future remember that I dispense with your attendance at night; I only want my valets de chambre."

After this information (with which I was very well pleas'd at the bottom, as it spared me a subjection which would sometimes have been disagreeable to me), I left the Marquis in his apartment, and withdrew to my garret. I went to bed; but, nor being able to sleep, I resolv'd to follow the counsel

of Pythagoras, that is, to recollect at night what one has done in the day, in order to applaud one's self for one's good actions, and reproach ourselves for our bad ones.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct. I disapproved my having seconded Laura's imposture. It was in vain for me to excuse myself by saying, that I could not handsomely give a woman the lie, whose only design was to do me service, and that I was in some sort under a necessity of being an accomplice in her treachery. Not being contented with this excuse, I answered, that then I ought not to have pushed matters farther, and that I must be very impudent to live with a nobleman whose confidence I repaid so ill. In short, after a strict examination, I agreed with myself that, if I was not a rogue, I did not want much of it.

From thence going on to the consequences, I represented to myself, that I ran a great hazard in imposing upon a man of quality, who might perhaps, for my sins, not be long before he found out the cheat. Such a judicious reflection put me under some apprehensions : but the ideas of pleasure and interest soon dispersed them : besides, the prophecy of my elixir merchant was sufficient to encourage me. I delivered myself therefore up to agreeable fancies. I set myself about casting up how much my wages would amount to in ten years service. To this I added the presents I should receive from my master, and, reckoning them up according to his liberal temper, or rather to my desire, I gave such a career to my imagination, if I may so express myself, as set no bounds to my good fortune. So much riches lulled me to rest by little and little, and I went to sleep, building castles in the air.

I got up the next morning by eight o'clock to receive my patron's orders ; but, as I opened my door to go out, I was very much surpris'd to see him be-
fore

fore me in his night-gown and cap. He was all alone. "Gil Blas," said he, "I promised your sister last night when I left her, that I would be with her this morning; but some business of consequence prevents my keeping my word. Go and tell her from me, that I am very sorry for this disappointment, and assure her that I will sup with her again to-night. This is not all," continued he, putting into my hand a purse with a little shagreen box set with diamonds, "carry her my picture, and keep this purse wherein there are fifty pistoles, which I give you as a testimony of the kindness I already have for you. I took the picture with one hand, and with the other the purse I so little deserved; and, running instantly to Laura, I said to myself in a transport of joy: "Well, the prophecy is fulfilled visibly. How fortunate is it to be brother to a handsome and gallant girl! It is pity it is not as honourable as it is profitable and agreeable."

Laura, contrary to the custom of persons of her profession, used to rise early in the morning. I surprised her at her toilet, where, in expectation of her Portuguese, she was setting off her natural beauty with all the auxiliary charms that the art of a coquet could lend her. "Amiable Estella," said I on my entering the room, "the load-stone of foreigners, I may now take the liberty of eating with my master, since he has honoured me with a commission which gives me that privilege, and which I am now come to discharge. He cannot be so happy as to visit you this morning as he proposed; but, to make amends, he will sup with you to-night, and he has sent you his picture, which seems to me to have something very comfortable in it."

Hereupon I immediately presented her the box, the lustre of whose diamonds infinitely rejoiced her. She opened it, and having shut it, after looking carelessly upon the painting, she returned to the

jewels. She extolled their beauty, and said to me smiling: "These are copies which we players love better than the originals."

I informed her afterwards, that the generous Portuguese, on delivering me the picture, had presented me with a purse of fifty guineas. "I congratulate you upon it," replied she. "This nobleman begins at a rate that others seldom arrive at." "It is to you, my charmer," said I, "that I owe this present; the Marquis only gave it me on account of my being your brother." "I wish," replied she, "that he would make you the same every day. I cannot express how dear you are to me. The first minute I saw you, I conceived such a value for you, that time has not been able to efface. When I lost you at Madrid, I did not despair of finding you again; and yesterday when you came, I received you as a man that must necessarily return to me. In short, friend, Heaven has destined us for one another. You shall be my husband; but we must first get money. I will have three or four intrigues more to enable you to live at your ease."

I thanked her very politely for the pains she was so willing to take for me; and we engaged insensibly in a discourse that held till noon. Then I took my leave, in order to give my master an account how his present had been received. Although Laura had given me no instructions thereupon, I did not fail to study a fine compliment by the way, which I proposed to make in her name; but it was so much time lost; for, when I got to the house, they told me that the Marquis was just gone out; and it was determined that I should see him no more; as will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. XI.

Of the news which Gil Blas heard, and how it thunder-struck him.

I WENT to my eating-house, where I met two men of an agreeable conversation, with whom I dined and sat at table till play time, when we parted, they to go about their respective business, and I to the theatre. It may be observed *en passant*, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humour: the discourse I had with these cavaliers was full of gaiety; the aspect of my fortune was the most promising in the world; and yet nevertheless I could not forbear giving way to melancholy, without knowing why, or being able to resist it. Undoubtedly I had a foresight of the misfortune that threatened me.

Upon my going behind the scenes, Melchior Zapata, coming up to me, whispered me to follow him. I did so, and he carried me into a private part of the house, where he spake to me after this manner. "Signior Cavalier, I think it my duty to inform you of something of great importance. You know that the Marquis de Marialva took at first a liking to Narcissa my spouse. He had even appointed a day to come and eat of my rib, when the artful Estella found the means to break off the engagement, and draw the Portuguese to her. You may well judge that an actress does not lose so fine a morsel without a sensible displeasure. This sticks in my wife's stomach; and there is nothing she would not do to be revenged. She has now a fine opportunity. Last night, if you remember all our waiters ran to see you. The under-snuffer of the candles said to some of our company that he knew you, and that you are not in the least Estella's brother."

"This report," continued Melchior, "is now
come"

come to the ears of Narcissa, who did not fail to ask the author, who confirmed it. He knew you, as he says, servant to Arsenia, at the same time that Estella waited on her at Madrid, under the name of *Laura*, My spouse, charmed with this discovery, will acquaint the Marquis de Marialva with it, who will be to-night at the play. Take your measures accordingly ; if you are not really Estella's brother, I advise you as a friend, on account of our former acquaintance, to provide for your safety. Narcissa, who demands but one victim, has allowed me to give you this information, that you may by your speedy flight prevent some unlucky accident."

It would have been to no purpose to have told me any more. I thanked the player for his intelligence, letting him see by my terrour, that I was not a man that would give the under-candle-snuffer the lie. I did not find myself at all disposed to carry my impudence so far. I was not even tempted to take my leave of *Laura*, for fear she should draw me in to pay for my presumption. I easily conceived that she was actress good enough to extricate herself from such a false step ; but I could foresee nothing but an infallible punishment for myself ; and I was not amorous enough to brave it. For this reason I thought of nothing but how to save myself with my gods *penates*, I mean, with my things. I vanished from the playhouse in a moment, and in less than the twinkling of an eye I had my cloakbag carried to a muleteer's, who was to set out the next morning at three o'clock for Toledo. I could have wished to have been already at the Count de Polan's, whose house seemed to me the only place of refuge where I could be safe. But I was not yet there, and I could not without uneasiness think upon the time I was forced to pass in a city where I was apprehensive that they would search for me that very night.

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However, I went to sup at my eating-house, though I was in as much trouble as a debtor, who knows the serjeants are at his heels. What I ate that night, I believe did not produce an excellent chyle in my stomach. Miserable sport of fear that I was, I examined all the persons that entered the hall: and, when unluckily there came any ill looked fellows, (which is not uncommon in those places), I shuddered with fear. Having supped in continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to my mule-driver's, where I threw myself down upon some clean straw, till the time of my departure.

My patience was put to a very severe trial during that time. A thousand disagreeable thoughts came to torment me. If at any time I dropped asleep, I imagined I saw the furious Marquis falling upon Laura, mangling her pretty face, and breaking all her furniture to pieces; or else I thought I heard him ordering his servants to cudgel me to death. Hereupon I started out of my sleep; and my waking, which is generally so agreeable after a frightful dream, was yet more dreadful to me than my slumbers.

By good luck the muleteer came to free me from my pain, by telling me that his mules were ready. I immediately got up, and, thank Heaven, I set out thoroughly cured both of Laura and chiromancy. In proportion as we got farther from Grenada, my mind became more composed. I began to discourse with my muleteer. I laughed at some pleasant stories he told me, and lost insensibly all my apprehensions. I slept very quietly at Ubeda, where we took up our first night's lodging, and the fourth we reached Toledo. My first care was to inquire after the Count de Polan's house, whither I went fully persuaded, that he would not suffer me to lodge any where but with him. But I reckoned without my host; for I only found the house-keeper,

keeper, who told me that his master had set out the night before for the castle of Leyva, whence he had been informed that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I had never dreamed of the Count's absence. It diminished my joy for being at Toledo, and made me take another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I determined to go there. I reflected that I might push my fortune at court, where, as I had been told, a great genius was not absolutely necessary to advance one's self. The next morning I took the opportunity of a returned horse, to go to that capital of Spain. Fortune conducted me thither, in order to my acting parts of greater consequence than ever I had yet played.

C H A P. XII.

Gil Blas goes to lodge in a house ready-furnished, where he gets acquainted with Capt. Chinchilla; what sort of a man that officer was, and what business brought him to Madrid.

AS soon as I got to Madrid, I took up my lodging in a ready furnished house, where, amongst others, there lived an old captain, who was come from the farthest end of New Castile, to solicit a pension from the court, which he thought he had deserved but too well; his name was *Don Hannibal de Chinchilla*. It was not without surprise that I beheld him the first time. He was a man of threescore, of a giant's size, and prodigiously lean. He wore a pair of thick whiskers, which ran winding up on both sides to his temples. Besides his having but one leg and one arm, he had one eye covered with a piece of green taffery, and his face seemed flashed in several places. This excepted, he was made like another man. Besides, he did not want for wit, and yet less for gravity. He carried his morals even to scrupulousness, and valued him-
self,

self, above all, on being delicate in point of honour.

After having conversed with him twice or thrice, he did me the favour to make me his confident. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He told me in what engagements he had lost an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in all the accounts he gave me of his battles and sieges, was, that he did not let slip one vain glorious expression, not one word in his own praise; though I could willingly have forgiven his bragging of that half of him which was left, to make him amends for the loss of the other. The officers who return safe and sound from the wars, are not at all so modest.

But he told me that what lay most upon his spirits, was his having spent a considerable income in his campaigns, so that he had no longer any more than a hundred ducats a-year left, which was hardly sufficient to keep his mustachios in order, pay for his lodging, and the writing his petitions. "For, in short, Signior Cavalier," continued he, shrugging up his shoulders, "I present them, thank God, every day, without the least notice being taken of them. One would swear that a wager had been laid between the first minister and me; and that it was, which of us two should be first tired, I of giving, or he of receiving them. I have also had the honour of presenting some frequently to the King; but like man like master, and all this time my castle at Chinchilla falls to ruin for want of repairs."

"One must despair of nothing," replied I to the Captain, "perhaps you are upon the point of seeing your labour and pains repaid with interest." "I ought not to flatter myself with such hopes," answered Don Hannibal. "It is not three days since I spoke to one of the prime minister's secretaries, and, if I believe his words, I have nothing to do but

but to sit down contented." "What did he say to you then, Signior?" replied I. "Did not the condition to which you are reduced seem to him worthy of a recompense?" "You shall be judge," answered Chinchilla. "The secretary told me plainly, "Good gentleman, do not brag so much of your zeal and your fidelity. You have done but your duty in exposing yourself to dangers for your country. The glory alone, that is inseparable from great actions, is a sufficient payment for them, and ought to satisfy especially one that is a Spaniard. You must be undeceived therefore, if you look upon the gratuity, for which you solicit, as a debt. If it should be granted you, you will stand indebted for it only to the King's goodness, who is willing to think himself obliged to such of his subjects who have served the state well." "You see by this," continued the Captain, "that the other half of me is still in arrears to my country, and that I am very likely to return as I came."

It is natural to concern one's self for a brave man whom one sees suffer. I exhorted him to hold out, and offered to transcribe his petitions *gratis*. I even went so far as to open him my purse, and conjure him to take out what money he pleased. But he was not one of those who do not want to be asked twice on such an occasion. On the contrary, shewing himself very nice on that subject, he thanked me with some haughtiness for my good-will. After this he told me, that, because he would not be chargeable to any one, he had used himself by degrees to live so temperately, that the least food would serve him for his subsistence. This was but too true; he lived only upon scallions and onions; accordingly he had nothing but skin and bones; and, that nobody might be a witness of his hard fare, he generally locked himself in his chamber at meal-time. However I did prevail upon him by repeated entreaties, that we might dine and sup together;

ther; and, deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, I had a great deal more meat and wine brought than was necessary for myself only. At first he would have excused himself by compliments; but at last he was overcome by my importunity. After which, growing insensibly more hardy, he helped me to empty my dish, and drink off my bottle of his own accord.

When he had taken off four or five glasses, and reconciled his stomach to a good nourishment; "Indeed," said he, with a gay air, "Signior Gil Blas, you are very seducing; you make me do just as you please. You have such a way, that you even make me banish all fear of imposing upon your good-nature." My captain seemed then to have so much conquered his modesty, that, if I had again pressed him to have accepted of my purse, I believe he would not have refused it; but I did not put him any more to that trial. I contented myself with having made him my mess-mate, and taking the pains, not only to transcribe his petitions, but even to help to compose them. By having so often copied the homilies over fair, I had learned to give a phrase a good turn; I was become a kind of author. On the other hand, the old officer valued himself upon writing a fine style. So that, striving each to outvie the other, we made pieces of eloquence not unworthy the most celebrated orators of Salamanca. But it was all in vain either for the one or the other of us to pump our wits for flowers of rhetoric, to embellish those petitions; it was (as one may say), labour in vain. Whatever turn we gave to Don Hannibal's services to stamp a value upon them, the court had no regard to them. This did not induce the old invalid to make a panegyric upon such officers as ruined themselves in the wars. In his ill humour he cursed his stars, and wished the devil had Naples, Lombardy, and the Low-Countries.

To

To mortify him yet more, it happened one day, that a poet, introduced by the Duke d'Alba, having recited before the King a sonnet upon the birth of an infant, was rewarded before his very face with a pension of 500 ducats. I believe the mangled captain would have run mad, if I had not taken care to hearten him. "What is the matter with you?" said I to him, seeing him beside himself. "There is nothing in it that ought to discompose you. Have not the poets time out of mind made princes tributary to the muses? There is never a crowned head but what has some of these gentlemen for its pensioners. And, *entre nous*, these sorts of pensions being seldom unknown to posterity, immortalize the liberality of monarchs, whereas the others that they bestow are often so much lost to their fame. How many rewards has Augustus given? how many pensions has he bestowed, of which we have no knowledge? But latest posterity will know, as well as we, that Virgil received from that emperor almost two hundred thousand crowns.

Whatever I could say to Don Hannibal, the sonnet lay like lead upon his stomach; and, not being able to digest it, he resolved to abandon all. However, to make his last push, he would present one more petition to the Duke of Lerma. With this intent, we went both to the prime minister's, where we met with a young fellow, who (after having saluted the Captain), said to him in an affectionate air, "My dear old master, is it you that I see? What business has brought you to his Excellency's? If you stand in need of a person who has some credit here, make use of me; I offer you my service." "How, Pedrillo," replied the officer, "to hear you, one would think that you had some post of importance in this house." "At least," answered the young fellow, "I have interest enough to do an honest Hidalgo like you a pleasure." "If it be so,"

to," replied the Captain with a smile, "I will have recourse to your protection." "I grant it you," said Pedrillo. "You need only tell me the business in hand, and I promise to obtain something for you of the prime minister."

We had no sooner satisfied this obliging young fellow, but he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; then, having assured us that we should hear from him the next day, he vanished without informing us what he intended to do, or even telling us whether he was a domestic to the Duke of Lerma. I was desirous to know who this Pedrillo was, that seemed to me so diligent. "He is a young fellow," replied the Captain, "who served me some years ago, and finding my circumstances fell to decay, left me to look for a place of more profit. I do not take it ill of him; it is very natural to change for the better. He is an arch fellow who does not want for wit, and is as intriguing as the devil. But, in spite of all his skill, I do not depend much upon the zeal he has just expressed for me." "Perhaps," said I, "he may be useful to you; for instance, if he should belong to some of the Duke's principal officers, he may do you a service. You are not ignorant, that amongst great persons every thing is carried by intrigues and cabals; that they have domestics who govern them; and that these are governed in their turn by their footmen.

The next morning we saw Pedrillo come to our lodgings. "Gentlemen," said he, "if I did not explain myself yesterday about the means I had to serve Capt. Chinchilla, it was because we were not in a proper place to intrust you with such a secret. Besides, I was willing to see whether the thing was feasible, before I opened myself to you. Know then that I am the favourite servant to Don Rodriguez de Calderona, first secretary to the Duke of Lerma. My master, being very gallant, goes almost every night to sup with a nightingale of Arragon, whom

whom he keeps in a cage near the court. She is a young girl of Albarazin, one of the handsomest that can be seen. She has wit, and sings to admiration. Accordingly she is called *Sennora Sirena*. As I carry her every morning a billet-doux, I come now from seeing her. I proposed to her to let Don Hannibal pass for her uncle, and under colour of that to engage her gallant to protect him. She is very willing to undertake the matter; for, besides the little advantages she proposes to herself from it, she will be overjoyed with being thought niece to a brave gentleman."

Signior de Chinchilla looked sour at this discourse. He expressed a great aversion to being made an accomplice to a trick, and yet more to suffering a jilt to dishonour him, by pretending to be of his family. He was not only shocked with respect to himself; he saw therein (to use that expression) a retro-active ignominy which reflected back upon his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unseasonable to Pedrillo, who was displeased with it. "Are you mad," cried he, "to take it after that manner? This is just the temper of you, you petty gentlemen, you have a vanity that makes you ridiculous. "Signior Cavalier," continued he, addressing himself to me, "are not you surprised at the scruples that he makes? Good God! is it at court that one must examine things so nicely! Under whatever despicable shape fortune appears there, they take care not to let her slip.

I applauded Pedrillo's speech, and we both harangued the Captain so well, that we made him Sirena's uncle in spite of his teeth. When we had gained so far upon his pride, we all three set ourselves about writing a fresh petition for the prime minister, which was reviewed, augmented, and corrected. I afterwards copied it over fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Arragonian, who that very night gave it in charge to Don Rodriguez, to whom she

He represented the matter so well, that the Secretary believing her really the Captain's niece, promised to make use of his interest for him. A few days afterwards, we found the effects of this management. Pedrillo came back to our lodging with an air of triumph: "Good news," said he to Chinchilla, "the King will make a distribution of commanderies, benefices, and pensions, when you will not be forgot. But I am ordered to demand of you what present you think to make Sirena. As for me, I declare I will have nothing. I prefer the pleasure of contributing to the bettering the fortune of my old master to all the gold in the world. The nymph of Albarazin is not of the same temper. She is a little upon the Jew, when she is to do a service to her neighbour. She would take money of her own father; judge whether she would refuse that of a pretended uncle."

"She need only name her demand," replied "Don Hannibal. "If she desires every year a third of the pension that is granted me, I promise it her, and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic Majesty were at stake." "I should very willingly trust to your word," replied Don Rodriguez's Mercury, "I know very well that is sacred; but you have to do with a little gypsy who is naturally very mistrustful. Besides, she had much rather, once for all, that you should give her two thirds down in ready money." "And where the devil would she have me raise it?" said the officer, briskly interrupting him, "does she believe me a money-broker? You must certainly not have informed her of my circumstances." "Pardon me," replied Pedrillo, "she knows very well that you are as poor as Job. After what I have told her, she cannot be ignorant of it. But do not trouble yourself; I am a man fertile in expedients. I am acquainted with an old rogue of a lawyer, who loves to lend his money at ten *per cent*. You shall

shall make him an assignation and security for the first year of your pension, in consideration of the same sum which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you shall actually have all but the interest. As for the security, the lender shall content himself with your castle of Chinchilla, in the condition wherein it now is. You shall have no dispute about that."

The Captain protested that he would accept of these proposals, if he should be fortunate enough to have a share in the favours that were to be distributed next day. This happened accordingly; he was gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles upon a commandery. As soon as ever he had heard this news, he gave all the security that was demanded of him, finished his little affairs, and returned to New Castile with some pistoles in his pocket.

C H A P. XIII.

*Gil Blas meets with his dear friend Fabricio at court
Great joy between them on both sides. Where they
both went; and the curious conversation they had to-
ther.*

I Had used myself to go every morning to the King's apartment, where I spent two or three hours in seeing the grandees come in and go out; they seemed to me there not to be surrounded with that splendour they are elsewhere.

One day as I was walking and strutting about the lodgings, and making (as do a great many others) a very scurvy figure, I discovered Fabricio whom I had left at Valladolid, in the governour of the hospital's service. What surpris'd me was, that he conversed familiarly with the Duke de Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis de Santa-Cruz. These two noblemen, as I thought, took pleasure in his

discourie; add to this, he was dressed as handsomely as a noble cavalier.

"Am not I deceived?" said I to myself. "Is that the son of the barber Nunez? It is perhaps some young courtier who resembles him." I did not remain a long time in this uncertainty; the nobleman went out, and I accosted Fabricio, who, knowing me that minute, took me by the hand, and having made me thrust through the croud, to get out of the lodgings, "My dear Gil Blas," said he, embracing me, "I am overjoyed to see you again. What are you doing at Madrid? Are you in any place yet? Have you any post at court? In what state are your affairs? Give me an account of all that has happened since your precipitated departure from Valladolid." "You ask me a great many things at once," replied I, "and we are not here in a place proper to recount adventures." "You are in the right," rejoined he; "we shall be better at my lodgings. Come, I will carry you thither. It is not far from hence. I am independent, agreeably settled, my furniture perfectly good, I live contented, and am happy, since I think myself to be so.

I accepted his offer, and suffered myself to be led by Fabricio, who made me stop before a house that made a noble show, where he told he lived. We crossed a court, on one side whereof was a great stair-case that carried up to stately apartments, and on the other a little pair of back stairs as dark as narrow, by which we went up to the lodging which had been so much cried up. It consisted of only one chamber, whereof my ingenious friend had made four, separated by deal partitions. The first served as an antechamber to the second, where he lay; the third was his closet, and the last his kitchen. The chamber and antechamber were hung with maps, and the furniture was answerable to the hangings. It was a large bed of brocade very much worn,

worn, some old chairs of yellow serge trimmed with a silk Grenada fringe of the same colour, a table with gilt feet, covered with a leather that seemed to have been red, and bordered with a copper fringe that was turned black through length of time, together with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures coarsely carved. A little table served in his closet for a bureau, and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of papers which one might see disposed upon shelves along the wall. His kitchen, which was not unsuitable to the rest, consisted of earthen ware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricio, having given me time to consider his apartment, said to me. "What do you think of my house-keeping, and my lodging? Are you not charmed with it?" "Yes, faith," replied I, smiling; "you must manage your affairs very well at Madrid, to be so well settled here; without doubt you have some commission." "Heaven preserve me from it!" rejoined he. "The condition I have chosen is preferable to any employment. A person of distinction, to whom this hotel belongs, has given me a chamber therein, whereof I have made four, which I have furnished as you see. I only busy myself about things wherein I take pleasure, and I feel no necessity." "Explain yourself more clearly," said I, interrupting him. "You only heighten my curiosity to know what life you lead." "Well then," replied he, "I am going to satisfy you. I am turned author; I have commenced a wit; I write both in verse and prose; I am good at every thing."

"You a favourite of Apollo!" said I laughing: "That is what I could never have thought. I should have been less surprised at seeing you any thing else. What charms then have you found in the condition of poets? I should have fancied that those gentlemen were despised in civil life, and that they had no settled ordinary." "O fie!" cried he

in his turn, "you speak of those miserable authors whose works are the refuse of booksellers and players. Ought one to wonder if such writers are not esteemed? But the good ones are upon a better footing in the world. And I may say, without vanity, that I am of this number." "I doubt it not," replied I; "you are a young fellow of a good deal of wit; what you compose cannot be bad. I only wonder how the fury of writing first possessed you."

"Your surprise is just," rejoined Nunez; "I was so contented with my condition with Signior Manuel Ordonnez, that I did not wish to change. But my genius rising by degrees, like that of Plautus, above subjection, I wrote a comedy, which I had acted by the comedians at Valladolid. Though it was not worth a rush, it met with great success. By this I judged that the public was a good milch cow, that was easily milked. This reflection, and the eager desire of writing some new pieces, made me quit the hospital; the love of poetry weaned me from that of riches, and I resolved to go to Madrid, as being the centre of the beaux-esprits, to refine my taste there. Hereupon I asked my discharge of the governour, who did not give it me without regret, so great was his affection for me." "Fabricio," said he, "have you any reason to be dissatisfied with me?" "No, Sir," replied I, "you are the best of masters, and I am sensibly affected with your goodness. But you know one must follow one's stars. I find myself born to immortalize my name by my witty productions." "What a fellow is this!" said the good citizen. You are already naturalised in the hospital; you are upon the foundation whence the stewards are made, and even sometimes the governours. You will quit the solid to run after trifles. So much the worse for thee, child."

The governour seeing that he opposed my intention in vain, paid me my wages, and made me a

present of fifty ducats in acknowledgment of my services. So that with that and what I had scraped up in the little commissions wherewith I had been intrusted, I was in a condition, when I came to Madrid, to put myself in a handsome figure; which I did, though the writers of our nation do not value themselves much upon their dress. I soon became acquainted with Lopez de Vega Carpio, Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, and other famous authors; but preferable to these great men, I chose a young bachelor of Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced. He is not willing his works should be published in his lifetime; he satisfies himself with reading them to his friends. What is most particular, is, that nature has endued him with the uncommon talent of succeeding in all sorts of poetry. But principally he excels in satire, that is his masterpiece. He is not like Lucilius, a muddy river that carries a great deal of slime with it, he is the Tagus whose clear streams roll over a golden sand."

"You draw me," said I to Fabricio, "a fine picture of this bachelor; and I do not doubt but a person of such merit has a great many detractors." "All the authors," replied he, "both good and bad, inveigh against him. One says he loves bombast, puns, metaphors, and transpositions. Such an obscurity, says another, runs through all his verses, as was in those which the Salian priests sung in their processions, which nobody understood. There are some who even reproach him with making some sonnets or romances, sometimes comedies, sometimes stanzas, &c. as if he had extravagantly undertaken to surpass the best writers in all kinds of poetry. But all this jealous carping only loses its force against a muse, that is cherished both by the gaudes and the multitude."

It was under this able master that I served my apprenticeship, and I dare venture to say, that it is
apparent

apparent by my writings. I have imbibed so much of his wit, that I have already composed pieces which he would not be ashamed to own. I go, after his example, to recite my labours in great houses, where they receive me to admiration, and I meet with persons who are not difficult. It is true I have a good way of delivery, which does no injury to my compositions. In short, I am esteemed by several noblemen; especially I live with the Duke of Medina Sidonia as Horace did with Mæcenas. This," continued Fabricio, "is the way I commenced author. I have no more to tell you; now, Gil Blas, it is your turn to relate your adventures."

Then I assumed the discourse, and passing over every indifferent circumstance, I gave him the account he desired, after which it was time to think of dinner. Hereupon he took some napkins out of his ebony cupboard, together with bread, a piece of a roast shoulder of mutton, and a bottle of excellent wine; and we both sat down to table with all the gaiety of two friends who meet after a long separation. "You see," said he, "my free and independent life. I might, if I would, eat every day with persons of quality; but besides that the love of writing keeps me often at home, I am a little Aristippus. I can suit myself equally to the company of great men, and to a retired life, to abundance, and frugality."

We found the wine so good, that he was forced to fetch another bottle out of his cupboard; and when the cheese came upon the table, I told him that I should be very glad to see some of his productions. Immediately he looked for a sonnet amongst his papers, which he read to me with an emphasis. However, in spite of the charms of his delivery, I found the style so obscure, that I could not comprehend any part of it. He perceived it. "This sonnet," says he, "does not seem very clear

to you, does it?" I confessed that I could have wished for a little more clearness in the expressions. Upon this he fell a-laughing at my expense. "If this sonnet," replied he, "is not intelligible, so much the better. A natural and simple style is not agreeable to sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. All their merit consists in their obscurity. It is enough that the poet thinks he understands himself." "What, do you banter me, friend?" said I, interrupting him. "There must be good sense, and a clearness of expression in all poetry, of whatever nature it is. And if your incomparable Gongora does not write more intelligibly than you, I must own to you that the esteem I had conceived for him will be greatly diminished. He is a poet who at most can but impose upon his own age. Now let me see your prose."

Hereupon Nunez shewed me a preface which he intended (as he said) for a collection of comedies that were in the press; after which he asked me what I thought of it. "I am no better satisfied," replied I, "with your prose than your verse. Your sonnet is but a swelling bombast; and as for your preface, it is full of far-fetched expressions, and words that are not warranted by the public, or (if I may use that term) of perplexed phrases. In a word, your style is singular, the books of our good ancient authors are not so written." "Poor ignoramus!" said Fabricio: "you do not know that every prose writer who now aspires at the reputation of a masterly pen, affects this singularity of style, these out-of-the-way expressions that shock you. There are five or six bold innovators of us who have undertaken to turn the language topsyturvy. And we shall gain our point, an't please God, in spite of Lopez de Vega, Cervantes, and all the wits who cavil at our new way of speaking. We

We are seconded by a number of partizans of distinction, we have even some divines in our cabal."

"After all," continued he, "our design is laudable, and, prejudice apart, we are more to be valued than those easy writers who speak like the vulgar. I cannot imagine why so many gentlemen esteem them. It might do very well at Athens and Rome, where all the world were confounded; and that is the reason why Socrates tells Alcibiades that the people are an excellent schoolmaster. But at Madrid we have a good and a bad custom; and our courtiers express themselves after another manner than our citizens. You may believe me, in short, our new style carries the day from that of our antagonists. I will shew you by one touch, the difference between the genteelness of our expression, and the flatness of theirs. For instance, they would say after an easy manner: "Interludes set off a comedy;" whereas we should express ourselves more refinedly: "Interludes are an embellishment to a comedy:" observe well that embellishment. Do not you perceive the beauty, the gracefulness, and the nobleness of it?"

I interrupted my innovator, by a fit of laughter! "Fabricio," replied I, "you are an original with your affected language." "And you," rejoined he, "are but a dunce with your fluent style. Go," continued he, applying to me the words of the Archbishop of Grenda, "go to my treasurer. Let him give you a hundred ducats, and heaven guide you with that sum. Farewell, Monsieur Gil Blas, I wish you a little better taste." I redoubled my laughter at this flight; and Fabricio, forgiving my speaking with irreverence of his writings, did not at all flag in his good humour. We finished our second bottle; after which we both rose from the table in a pretty good cue. We went out with an intention to walk in the Prado; but passing by the

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door

door of a chocolate-house, we had a fancy to go in there.

This place was generally frequented by good company, and accordingly we saw in two separate rooms several cavaliers who were diverting themselves differently. In one, they were playing at primero and chess; and in the other, ten or twelve persons were very attentively listening to two professed wits who were disputing. We had no need to go very near them, to hear that their argument was upon a metaphysical proposition: for they spoke with so much heat and passion, that they looked like two that were possessed. I believe that if one had put Eleazer's ring under their noses, one should have seen the devils come out of their nostrils. "Good," said I to my companion, "what vivacity! what lungs! these disputants were born to be the public eriers. Most part of the company are forced to remove." "Yes indeed," replied he, "these men are certainly descended from the race of Novius the Roman banker, whose voice could be heard above the noise of the carmen. But," continued he, "what disgusts me most in their discourse, is, that our ears are deafened to no purpose." Hereupon we got at a distance from those roaring metaphysicians, whereby I diverted a violent headach that was beginning to seize me.

We went and placed ourselves in a corner of the other room, whence, whilst we were refreshing ourselves with cooling liquors, we set ourselves to examine the cavaliers that went out and in. Nunez knew almost all of them. "Good God," cried he, the dispute of our philosophers will not be yet over. Here come fresh reinforcements. Those three that just entered will engage therein. But do you see those two originals that are going out? That little swarthy lean person, whose long lank hair hangs down in equal portions before and behind, is called *Don Julian de Villanuno*. He is a young lawyer
who

who sets up for a pretty fellow. One of my friends and I went the other day to dine with him. We surprised him very singularly employed: he was diverting himself in his closet, by making a great greyhound fetch and carry the bags wherein were the papers of a law-suit, whereof he is to make the report, and which the dog tore in pieces. The licentiate with the red-face, who accompanies him, is named *Don Cherubin Tonto*. He is a canon of the church of Toledo, the weakest wretch in the world. Nevertheless, by his brisk lively air, you would take him for a man of wit. He has a sparkling eye, with a satirical malicious smile. One would believe that he was a man of bright thought. Does any one read a fine piece before him? he listens to it with an attention that seems to proceed from a good judgment, and nevertheless he understands not a word of it. He was at the lawyer's entertainment. A thousand bright things were said there, a number of jests broke; Don Cherubin spoke not a word but he applauded them with such a decisive air, as seemed superiour even to our brightest fallies."

"Do you know," said I to Nunez, "those two slovens who are leaning with their elbows upon a table, and whispering in this corner, breathing full in each other's faces?" "No," replied he, "their faces are unknown to me. But, according to all appearances, they are coffeehouse-politicians, who are censuring the government. Look upon that genteel cavalier who walks whistling about the room, and standing sometimes upon one leg, sometimes upon the other. It is Don Austin Moreto, a young poet who was not born without a talent, but has been rendered almost mad by the flattery of ignorant wretches. The man whom he accosts is one of his brethren, who turns prose into verse, and is also a little lunatic."

"What, yet more authors!" cried he, shewing me two swordsmen who were entering: "it seems

as if they had all appointed to come here, and pass in review before you. The one is Don Bernard Dessenguado, and the other Don Sebastian de Villa Viciosa. The first is a man full of gall, an author born under the constellation of Saturn, a mischievous mortal who takes a pleasure in hating all the world, and is himself not beloved by any one. As for Don Sebastian, he is an honest man, an author who will let nothing lie upon his conscience. He has had a piece lately acted at the play-house, which met with extraordinary success; and he is going to print it, that he may no longer impose upon the judgment of the public.

Gongora's charitable pupil was preparing to explain to me the figure of the moving picture before our eyes, when a gentleman of the Duke of Medina Sidonia came to interrupt him, by saying, "Signior Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, to tell you that his Grace wants to speak with you. He expects you at home." Nunez knowing that one cannot comply too soon with the desires of a great man, quitted me that moment to go to his Meccenas, leaving me in a great surprise at hearing him called *Don*, and finding him thus ennobled in spite of Master Chrysoptom the barber, his father.

C H A P. XIV.

Fabricio places Gil Blas with Count Galiano a Sicilian nobleman.

I Had too great a curiosity to see Fabricio again, to fail of being with him early the next morning. "Good morrow," said I at my entrance, to Signior Don Fabricio, "the flower, or rather the mushroom of the Asturian nobility." At these words he burst out a-laughing. "What then," cried he, "you have observed that they called me *Don*?" "Yes, my Gentleman," replied I, "and you would allow me to tell you, that, yesterday, in
recount-

recounting your metamorphoses, you forgot the best." "I agree with you," rejoined he; but, upon my word, if I have assumed that title, it was not so much to humour my own vanity, as to suit myself to that of others. You know the Spaniards. They have no manner of esteem for an honest man, if he has the misfortune to want for birth and money. I will say more, I see so many people, and Heaven knows of what sort, who style themselves *Don Francisco*, *Don Pedro*, *Don* what you please, that, if there is no imposture in the case, you must agree that the rank of nobility is very common, and that a plebeian of merit does them honour when he deigns to assume it.

"But to change the subjects," continued he; "last night at supper at the Duke of Medina Sidonia's, where among others was Count Galiano a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank, the discourse turned upon the ridiculous effects that are produced by self-love. Being charmed with the opportunity of entertaining the company thereupon, I diverted them with the history of the homilies. You may well think that your archbishop was handsomely rallied on all sides, which did not prove unlucky for you; for you was pitied, and Count Galiano, after having asked me a number of questions about you, to which you may imagine I made suitable answers, has ordered me to bring you to him. I was just coming to seek you for that purpose. Undoubtedly he intends to offer you to be one of his secretaries. I would not have you refuse that proffer; for the Count is rich, and lives at Madrid like an ambassador. It is said that he is come to court to confer with the Duke of Lerma about some crown-lands which that minister intends to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems generous, and full of candour and integrity. You cannot do better than to make your court to this nobleman. He is probably the person who is to

enrich you, according to the prophecy at Grenada."

"I was resolved," replied I to Nunez, "to have rambled a little, and have taken my pleasure, before I settled again in a service; but the picture you have drawn of this Sicilian Count makes me change my mind. I wish I were already with him."

"That thou shalt presently," rejoined he, "or I am much mistaken." At the same time we both went straight to the Count's, who lodged in the house of Don Sanchez d'Avila his friend, who was then in the country.

On entering the court we found a number of pages and footmen in a rich well-fancied livery, and in the antechamber, several gentlemen of the horse, gentlemen, and other officers. They were all magnificently clothed, but with that had such uncouth faces, that I thought I saw a company of apes in a Spanish dress. There are men and women of such a make that no art will mend them.

They carried in word that Don Fabricio was there; upon which he was introduced in a minute into the chamber, where I followed him. The Count was in his nightgown, sitting upon a sofa, and drinking chocolate. We saluted him with all manner of demonstrations of a profound respect; and he, on his side, bowed his head, with such a gracious look, that I immediately found he had won my heart; the admirable and yet usual effect that a favourable reception from a great man produces. They must give us but a very cool welcome when they displease us.

Having drunk his chocolate, he diverted himself sometime with playing with a large ape that was by him, and was called *Cupid*. I cannot imagine why the name of that god was given to that animal; unless it was because he was full as malicious; for he did not resemble him a jot in any other respect. However,

ever, such as he was, his master took great pleasure in him, and was so charmed with his pretty tricks, that he had him continually in his arms. Though Nunez and I were but little diverted with the ape's gambols, we pretended to be ravished with them. This was very agreeable to the Sicilian, who suspended for a while the pleasure he took in this pastime to tell me: "Friend, it shall be your own fault if you are not one of my secretaries. If you like the offer, I will give you two hundred pistols a-year: it is enough that Don Fabricio presents you, and answers for you." "Yès, my Lord," cried Nunez, "I am bolder than Plato, who durst not be answerable for one of his friends whom he sent to Dionysius the tyrant. I am not afraid of deserving your reproaches."

I thanked the Asturian poet with a bow for his obliging confidence; then addressing myself to my patron, I assured him of my zeal and fidelity. The nobleman no sooner saw that his proposal was accepted, than he ordered his comptroller to be called, and whispered him; after which he said: "Gil Blas, you shall know presently how I intend to employ you: in the mean while you have nothing to do but to follow my intendant. I have given him some orders relating to you. I obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the Count and Cupid."

The comptroller, who was a sharp Messineze, conducted me to his apartment, and overwhelmed me with civilities. Then he sent for the tailor who had clothed all the family, and ordered him speedily to make me a suit of the same magnificence with those of the head officers of the house. The tailor having taken my measure retired. "As for your lodging," said the Messineze, "I know a chamber that will fit you. But," continued he, "have you breakfasted?" I answered, No." "Ah, poor fellow," rejoined he, "why did not you speak? Come, I will

I will lead you to a place where, Heaven be thanked, one need only ask and have."

At these words he carried me down into the but-tery, where we found the steward, a Neapolitan, full as good as the Messineze. One might say, of the comptroller and him, that they were a complete pair. This honest steward was sitting with five or six of his friends, who were cramming themselves with hams, neats-tongues, and other salt-victuals, which obliged them to drink one glass after another. We joined these good fellows, and helped them to dispatch the Count's best wines. Whilst things went thus in the buttry, they were not much better in the kitchen: the cook was also entertaining three or four citizens of his acquaintance, who did not spare the wine any more than us, and were gorging their stomachs with rabbit and partridge pies. Even the very scullions made themselves merry with what they could pilfer. I thought I was in an house that was given up to be pillaged. Nevertheless this was nothing. I saw only trifles, in comparison of what I did not see.

C H A P. XV.

Of the employment Gil Blas had in Count Galiano's house.

I Went out to fetch my things, and have them brought to my new lodging. When I came back, the Count was at table with several noblemen and poet Nunez, who sat and was waited upon with an easy air, and made one in the conversation. I even observed that he did not speak one word but what was agreeable to the company. Well fare wit! when a man is master of it he may act what part he pleases.

As for me, I dined with the officers, who were treated almost like their master. Dinner being over, I withdrew to my chamber, where I began to reflect

reflect upon my condition. "Well, Gil Blas," said I, "you are now with a Sicilian Count, with whose character you are not acquainted. To judge by appearances, you will live in clover. But I would not have you swear for any thing; and you ought to distrust your stars, whose malignity you have experienced but too often. Besides this, you are ignorant what employment he designs you. He has already secretaries and a comptroller: what service then can you do him? Without doubt he intends to make you his Mercury; so much the better, one cannot be upon a more profitable footing with a nobleman, to make one's fortune quickly. In more creditable posts one advances but slowly, neither does one always hit the mark."

Whilst I was making such fine reflections, a footman come to tell me that all the cavaliers who had dined at our house were just gone home, and the Count asked for me. I flew immediately to his apartment, where I found him stretched out upon his sofa, and ready to take his siesta with the ape, which was by him.

"Come hither, Gil Blas," said he, "take a chair, and hearken to me," I did as he ordered, and he spoke after this manner. "Don Fabricio has told me, that, amongst other good qualities, you are very affectionate to your masters, and are a person of integrity. These two things made me resolve to propose your living with me. I want a servant who will be wedded to my interests, and employ all his attention in preserving my estate. I am rich indeed, but my expences every year exceed my revenues very much. And why? because they rob me, because they plunder me. I am in my house as in a wood beset with thieves. I suspect my comptroller and steward of having an intelligence together; and if I am not deceived in my conjectures, that is more than enough to ruin me utterly. You will answer, that if I believe

lieve them rogues I have nothing to do but to dismiss them. But where shall I get others that are of a different nature? I will be contented with having them both observed by a man, who shall have power to overlook their conduct. And I have chosen you for that place. If you acquit yourself well of it, be assured you do not serve one that will be ungrateful. I will take care to settle you very advantageously in Sicily.

Having discoursed me thus, he sent me away; and that very night I was proclaimed superintendant of the house, before all the domestics. The Messineze and the Neapolitan were not much mortified at first, because they thought me a good companion, who would easily compound with them, and they reckoned, that, by letting me go snacks, they might keep on at their old rate. But they found themselves devilishly mistaken the next day, when I declared that I was an utter enemy to any breach of trust. I asked the steward an account of the provisions. I visited the cellars. I also inquired into the state of the buttery, I mean the plate and linen. After this I exhorted them both to be good managers of their master's money, to be frugal in their expenses, and concluded my exhortations, by protesting, that I would inform the Count of all the extravagancies that I should discover in his house.

This was not all. I would have a spy to find out if there was any secret understanding between them. In order to this, I fixed my eyes upon a scullion, who, suffering himself to be won over by my promises, told me that I could not have pitched upon a more proper person, to be informed of all that passed in the house. He said that the comptroller and steward were agreed together, and burned the candle at both ends; that they every day conveyed away half the victuals that were bought for the house: that the Neapolitan kept a
mistress

mistress who lived overagainst St. Thomas's college, and that the Messineze had another at the Sun-gate: that these two sparks sent every day to their nymphs provision of all sorts: that the cook, for his part, dispatched good plates full to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood, and that by virtue of the services he did the two others, to whom he was intirely devoted, he disposed as well as them of the wines in the cellar. In short, that these three domestics were the occasion of making such a horrible expense at the Count's. "If you doubt my account," adds the scullion, "only take the trouble to meet me to morrow at seven in the morning near St. Thomas's gate; you will see me laden with a large basket that will quickly convince you of the truth." "What," replied I, "then it seems you are a factor to these gallant purveyors?" I, rejoined he, "am employed by the steward, and one of my comrades does the message of the comptroller."

I had the curiosity next day to go at the appointed hour to St. Thomas's college. I did not wait long for my spy. I saw him coming with a vast basket full of butcher's meat, poultry, and wild-fowl. I took an inventory of each sort, and drew up, upon my pocket-book, a little verbal case, after having bid Mr. Turnspit discharge his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman being naturally very passionate, would in his first transports have turned away both the Neapolitan and the Messineze; but having reflected better upon it, he satisfied himself with dismissing the latter, whose place he gave me. Thus my post of superintendant was suppressed a little after its creation, and to own freely I did not regret it. It was, properly speaking, but the employment of an honourable spy, a place that had nothing solid in it. On the other hand, being made Mr. Comptroller, I was master of the strong box,

box, and that is the chief thing. He is the domestic who has the first rank in a great house; and there are so many little perquisites annexed to his post, that he would become rich, even though he were an honest man.

My Neopolitan, who was not at the end of his roguery, observing that I was passionately zealous for my master, and that I resolved every morning to observe what meat he bought, and to keep a register of it, left off conveying any away; but the hang-dog continued to take the same quantity each day, by this trick. He increased the profits he had from the meat that came off the table, which of right belonged to him; so that he was at least enabled to send his mistress good store of provision ready dressed, though he could no longer furnish her with any raw. In short, the cunning devil lost nothing, and the Count was not a jot the forwarder for having a phoenix of a comptroller. The excessive profusion with which I then saw each entertainment overcharged, made me immediately suspect this new trick; and I as soon put a stop to it, by retrenching the superfluities of each course. However I did this with so much prudence, that it had not in the least the air of parsimony. One would have sworn the extravagance had still continued the same; and yet, by this oeconomy I considerably diminished my master's expenses. This was just what he wanted; he would keep within bounds, and yet make as magnificent a figure. Avarice was not so predominant in him as ostentation.

There was yet another abuse to be reformed. I found that the wine went very fast. If, for example, twelve cavaliers were at the Count's table, there would be fifty, and sometimes threescore flasks dispatched. This very much surprised me; and not in the least doubting but there was some cheat in it, I consulted my oracle thereupon, that

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is to say, my scullion, with whom I often discoursed in private, and who gave me a faithful account of all that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was suspected by no body.

He informed me that the waste whereof I complained, proceeded from a new combination between the steward, the cook, and the footmen who filled out the wine; that the latter carried back the bottles half full; which were afterwards divided amongst the cabal. Upon this I reprimanded the footmen, and threatened to turn them out of doors, if they ever ventured to do the same again, which was enough to make them return to their duty. As I carefully informed my master of the least thing I did for his advantage, he overwhelmed me with praises, and I seemed every day to be more and more in his favour. On the other hand, to make the scullion some amends for having done me such good service, I made him under-cook.

The Neapolitan was almost mad to find that I met with him every way; and what mortified him most, was the continual contradictions he was exposed to every time he came to bring me his accounts. For that I might clip his wings the better, I took the pains to go to the markets to know the price of provisions. So that after that I saw through all his designs; and as he was always intent upon his own profits, and for that purpose would have fixed his own exorbitant prices upon every thing, I reprimanded him severely. I was very well satisfied that he cursed me a hundred times a day; but the grounds of his execrations made me not in the least apprehensive of their taking effect: I cannot imagine how he could bear with so many contradictions, and not leave the Sicilian Count's service. Unquestionably he found his account therein, in spite of my deductions.

As I saw Fabricio from time to time, I informed him of all my exploits, as Mr. Comptroller,
such

such as were before unheard of ; but I found him more inclined to blame my conduct, than approve it. " Heaven grant," said he to me one day, " that, after all this, your disinterestedness be well recompensed ; but between you and me, if you were not quite so hard upon the steward, I believe it would not be the worse for you." " What," replied I, " shall the thief in his accounts impudently rate a fish at ten pistoles, which costs him but four, and would you have me overlook such an article ? " " Why not ? " retorted he coolly. " He need only give you half the overplus, and then he will do things according to form. Upon my life, friend," continued he shaking his head, " you are a downright spoil-house ; and you are very likely to be a servant as long as you live, since you don't strike while the iron is hot. Know that fortune is like one of those jilting coquets, who slip through the fingers of such lovers as do not use them roughly.

I only laughed at Fabricio's discourse ; he even laughed at it himself, and would have persuaded me that he was not in earnest. He was ashamed of having given me such bad counsel to no purpose. I remained fixed in my resolution of being always faithful and zealous to my master. I did not degenerate, and I dare say that by my frugality, in four months, I saved him at least three thousand ducats.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the accident that happened to Count Galiano's ape : of that nobleman's concern for it. How Gil Blas fell sick, and the effects of his sickness.

AT the expiration of that time, the quiet of our hotel was strangely disturbed, by an accident that will perhaps seem but a trifle to the reader, which however proved no laughing-matter to the domestics.

domestics, and especially to myself. Cupid the ape before mentioned, that favourite of our master's, leaping one day from one window to another, performed so ill that he fell down into the court, and dislocated a leg. The Count no sooner knew of this misfortune, than he cried out loud enough to be heard by the neighbourhood; and quarrelling with all his domestics in the excess of his grief, he was within an ace of turning us all out of doors. However he confined his anger so far, as only to curse our negligence, and rattle us, without keeping within any manner of bounds. Not only so, he sent immediately for those surgeons who are the most skilful at Madrid for fractures and luxations of bones. These examined the patient's leg, set it, and applied a bandage. But although all of them assured him there was no harm done, that did not hinder our master's retaining two of them to attend poor Pug, till he was quite well.

I should be to blame if I should omit taking notice of the Count's trouble and disquiet all this time. Would one believe that he scarce stirred all day from his dear Cupid? He was always present when he was dressed; and would rise twice or thrice in the night to see him. But the plague of all was, that all the domestics, and especially myself, were obliged to be always ready to run whenever it was thought proper for Pug's service; in fine, there was no rest in our house, till the cursed creature having quite forgotten its fall, began to play its tricks and gambols again, as usual. After this, who will refuse to give credit to Suetonius, when he says, that Caligula was so fond of his horse, that he provided him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him; and that he would even have made him a consul. My master was not less charmed with his pug, he would willingly have made him a corregidor.

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The worst of all for me was that I had surpassed all the servants, that I might make my court the better to my Lord; and I had bestirred myself so violently for his Cupid, that I fell sick. I was seized with a high fever, and my disease increased so, that I lost my senses. I am intirely ignorant what they did to me for the space of a fortnight, that I lay fluctuating between life and death. I only know, that my youth struggled so well with the fever, and perhaps with the medicines that were given me, that I at last recovered my senses. The first use I made of them was to discover that I was not in my own chamber. I would have known the reason, and accordingly I asked it of an old woman who nursed me, but she answered that I must not speak; that the doctor had expressly forbid it. When one is well, one generally laughs at these physicians. Is one sick? one submits tractably to their prescriptions.

I resolved then to keep silence, whatever inclination I had to talk with my nurse. I was making reflections thereupon, when two things like beaux, very richly dressed, entered my room. They had each a suit of velvet, with very fine linen, and lace suitable to it. I imagined that they had been some noblemen, acquaintance of my master's, who came to see me, in respect to him. In this thought, I did my utmost to sit up, and was going out of deference to pull off my cap; but my nurse made me lie down again, informing me that these worshipful gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor drew near to me, felt my pulse, observed my looks, and finding all the signs of an approaching cure, he assumed an air of triumph; as if he had contributed mightily thereunto, adding that there wanted but one dose more to complete the work, and after that he might boast of having performed a wondrous cure. Having thus spoken, he made the apothecary write a prescription which he dictated,

dictated, and in the mean while was admiring himself in a glass, setting his hair in order, and making faces, whereat I could not forbear laughing in spite of the condition wherein I was. This done, he bowed to me very cavalierly, and went out better satisfied with his dear self, than with the drugs he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who was not come for nothing, set himself in order to administer—one may guess what. Whether he was afraid that the old woman would not perform her part well, or whether it was to enhance the price of his commodity, he would give it himself; but with all his address, I do not know how it happened, the operation was scarce over, but I, returning the operator his present, made his fine velvet coat in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune inseparable from pharmacy. Wherefore taking a napkin, he wiped himself without saying a word, and then went away fully resolved to make me pay the scourer, to whom without doubt he was obliged to send his coat.

He returned next morning dressed more decently, though he had nothing to apprehend that day, to bring me the dose the doctor had prescribed me the evening before. But besides finding myself better every hour, I had contracted such an aversion, ever since the day before, for all doctors and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where those gentlemen receive a power to kill men with impunity. Being in this disposition, I declared with an oath that I would have no more physic, and wished Hippocrates and his followers at the devil. The apothecary not valuing what became of his composition, provided he was paid for it, left it upon the table, and withdrew without speaking one syllable.

I immediately had the devilish dose thrown out of the window, being so prepossessed against it, that

I should have thought myself poisoned if I had swallowed it. To this act of disobedience I added another: I broke silence, and told my nurse in a positive tone, that I was absolutely resolved she should tell me news of my master. The old bel-dam either being apprehensive of causing a dangerous emotion, if she should satisfy me, or perhaps being only obstinate with design to exasperate me, and increase my distemper, hesitated whether she should answer; but I pressed her so sharply to obey, that at last she replied, "Signior Cavalier, you have no longer any other master but yourself; Count Galiano is returned to Sicily."

I could not believe what I heard; nevertheless nothing was more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my sickness, fearing lest I should die at his house, had me removed, with my little matters, into a ready-furnished room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to the care of providence, and a nurse. During these transactions, having received an order from court which obliged him to return to Sicily, he set out with so much precipitation, that he thought no more of me, whether it be that he reckoned me already among the dead, or that persons of quality are subject to such short memories.

My nurse gave me this account, and informed me that it was she who had fetched me a doctor and apothecary, that I might not perish for want of assistance. I fell into a profound reverie at this fine news. "Farewell my advantageous settlement in Sicily! Farewell my most charming hopes! When any great misfortune befalls you, says a certain pope, examine yourself well, and you will always find that it is a little owing to yourself. By your leave, good Mr. Pope, I do not see how, on this occasion, I contributed to my ill fortune."

When I found the flattering chimeras vanish that had filled my imagination, the first thing which took

took up my thoughts, was my cloak-bag, which I had brought upon my bed, that I might search it. I sighed upon my perceiving it opened. "Alas, my dear cloak-bag," cried I out, "my only comfort! You also, as far as I can see, have lain at the mercy of strangers." No, no, Signior Gil Blas," replied the old trot, "do not be disheartened. Nothing has been stolen from you. I have preserved your cloak-bag as I would my honour."

I found therein a suit I had when I entered the Count's service; but I in vain sought that which the Messineze had made for me. My master had not thought fit to leave it me, or else somebody had appropriated it to himself. All my other things were there, even to a large leather purse wherein I kept my money, which I counted twice over, not being able to believe at first, that I had but fifty pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty which were therein before my illness. "What is the meaning of this, good mother?" said I to my nurse: "my treasury here is strangely sunk." "Nevertheless nobody has touched your purse but myself," replied the beldam, "and I have managed your money as much as possible. But sickness is very chargeable, one must always go with money in one's hand. Here," continued this good housewife, drawing a bundle of papers out of her pocket, "here is an account of your expenses, which is as exact as a pair of gold scales, and which will shew you that I have not misemployed your treasure."

I ran over the account cursorily, which contained between fifteen and twenty pages. Heavens, how much poultry had been bought during the time I was light headed! There must have been at least twelve pistoles in broth only. The other articles were answerable to it. It is impossible to tell how much she had expended in wood, candles, water, brooms, &c. Nevertheless, however inflated her reckoning was, the whole sum hardly a-

mounted to thirty pistoles ; and consequently there ought still to have been a hundred and eighty remaining. I represented this to her ; but the hypocrite, with a solemn look, began to call all the saints to witness that there were but fourscore pistols in the purse, when the Count's steward intrusted her with the cloak-bag. What say you, good woman?" interrupted I with precipitation: "was it the steward who put my things into your hands?" Without doubt," replied she, "it was him. By the same token when he gave me them, he said, "Here, mother ; when Signior Gil Blas lies in pickle *, be sure let him have a handsome burial. There is enough in this cloak-bag to defray the charges."

"Ah, cursed Neapolitan," cried I out in a rage, "I am no longer at a loss to know what is become of my money that is wanting: you have swept that away to make amends for part of the robberies I prevented your committing." After this apostrophe, I thanked Heaven that the rogue had not carried off all. Nevertheless whatever reason I had to accuse the steward of having plundered me, it did not hinder my thinking that the nurse might very well have done it. My suspicions fell sometimes upon one, sometimes upon the other ; but it was still the same thing. I shewed no sign of it to the old woman ; I did not even cavil at the articles of her fine account. I should have got nothing by that, and every one must live by their trade. Wherefore I confined my resentment to paying her, and sending her away three days after.

I believe, on her quitting me, she went straight to inform the apothecary she had left me, and that I was well enough to run away without reckoning with him ; for a minute afterwards I saw him coming quite out of breath. He presented his bill, wherein he had written down all the pretended remedies he had brought me during the time I lay

* Extreme unction.

senseless, under such names as would have been unintelligible to me, although I had been a physician. One might call this account a true apothecary's bill. Accordingly we had a dispute when it came to be paid. I expected that he should bate half of his demand. He swore he would not bate a farthing. However, considering he was to deal with a young fellow who might remove that very day from Madrid, he chose rather to be satisfied with what I offered him, (that is say, thrice as much as the value of his drugs) than to run the hazard of losing all. I opened my purse to my great regret, and he went away sufficiently revenged for the little chagrin I had caused him, the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost the same minute. Those animals are always at the heels of one another. I summed up his visits, which had been very frequent, and sent him away contented. But before he left me, he gave me a particular account of the deadly accidents he had prevented in my sickness, to prove he had richly deserved my money. He did this in mighty fine terms, and with a very agreeable air; but I understood not one word of it. When I was rid of him, I thought I was freed from all those ministers of death; but I was deceived; there came also a surgeon, whom I had never seen in my life. He saluted me very civilly, and expressed his joy at seeing me escaped from the danger I had been in. This he attributed (as he said) to two plentiful bleedings, and to some cuppings which he had the honour of applying to me. This was another feather plucked from my wings; I was to make the surgeon a present. After so many evacuations, my purse was so weak, that one might say it was a dead corpse, it had so little left of the *humidum radicale*.

I began to lose all my courage, on seeing myself thus plunged again into such a miserable condi-

tion. I had contracted at my last master's too great a liking to the conveniencies of life ; I could no longer, as heretofore, face poverty like a Cynic philosopher. Nevertheless I own that I was in the wrong to give way to sorrow ; having so often found that fortune no sooner pulled me down, than she raised me up again. I ought to have looked upon the melancholy condition wherein I then was, only as the forerunner of some new prosperity.

B O O K VIII.

C H A P. I.

Gil Blas gets a good acquaintance, and finds a post that comforts him for the ingratitude of Count Galiano. The story of Don Valerio de Luna.

I Was so surpris'd at not hearing of Nunez in all this time, that I judg'd he must be in the country. Hereupon, as soon as I could walk, I went to his lodgings, and in effect I found that he had been three weeks in Andalusia with the Duke de Medina Sidonia.

One morning as I waked, I thought of Melchior la Ronda ; and remembering that I promised him, when at Grenada, that I would go and see his nephew, if ever I went to Madrid, I resolv'd to keep my word that very day : I inquired for Don Balthazar de Zuniga's, and went thither : I asked for Signior Joseph Navarro, who came to me in a minute. I saluted him : he received me very civilly, but with a cool air, though I had told him my name. I could not reconcile this frozen welcome with the picture that had been drawn me of this clerk of the kitchen. I was going to retire with a resolution not to make him a second visit, when

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on a sudden assuming a frank smiling air, he said with a great deal of life : " Ah Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, pray forgive my manner of receiving you : my memory had betrayed the inclination I have for you. I had forgot your name, and thought no more of the cavalier, whereof mention is made in a letter I received from Grenada, above four months ago.

" Let me embrace you." continued he, falling about my neck in a transport ! " My uncle Melchior, whom I love and respect as my own father, sends me word, that if by chance I should have the happiness to see you, he conjures me to treat you as if you were his own son, and to make use of all the credit I or my friends have, if needful, for your service. Besides, he has extolled your wit and temper in such terms as would induce me to serve you, if I were not engaged to it by his recommendation. Look upon me then, I beg you, as a man to whom my uncle has, by his letter, communicated all the sentiments he has for you. I make you an offer of my friendship, do not refuse me yours."

I answered Joseph's polite behaviour with a suitable acknowledgement ; and like a couple of brisk, open-hearted young fellows, we that minute entered into a strict friendship. I made no manner of scruple of discovering to him the situation of my affairs ; which I had no sooner done, than he told me : " I will take care to provide you a place, and in the mean while do not fail to come and eat here every day ; you will live better than at your ordinary. The offer was too agreeable to a person just recovered from a fit of sickness, whose purse was very low, and who had been used to good tables, to be rejected. I accepted of it, and picked up my crumbs so well in this house, that in a fortnight I had a face like a priest. It seemed to me that Melchior's nephew played his part there to a wonder ; but

how should he have done otherwise? He had three strings to his bow: he was, at once, butler, clerk of the kitchen, and steward. Besides, setting aside our friendship, I believe the comptroller and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly well recovered, when my friend Joseph seeing me coming one day to the hotel de Zuniga, met me, and said with a gay air: "Signior Gil Blas, I have a pretty good offer to make you; you must know that the Duke de Lerma, first minister of Spain, that he may give himself up entirely to the administration of state-affairs, intrusts two persons with the management of his own. He has trusted the charge of gathering his revenues to Don Diego Montefier, and the stewardship of his house to Don Rodriguez de Calderona. These two favourites exercise their employments with an absolute authority, and without depending upon each other. Don Diego has generally under him two deputies who receive the rents, and as I heard this morning that he has turned away one, I have been to beg the place for you. Signior de Montefier, who is acquainted with me, and who, I may say, has an esteem for me, has granted it me without any trouble, upon the account I have given him of your behaviour and capacity. We will go thither after dinner.

We did not fail. I was received very graciously and entered upon the office of the deputy who had been dismissed. This consisted in visiting our farms, making the necessary repairs, and receiving the farmers rents; in a word, I was employed in the country business, and every month I gave up my accounts to Don Diego, who examined them very attentively. This was what I wanted: although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was resolved still to preserve it.

One day we heard that the castle of Lerma had been set on fire, and that above half of it was reduced

reduced to ashes. I went immediately to the place to compute the damage. There having informed myself exactly of the circumstances of the conflagration, I drew up an ample account, which Montefier shewed to the Duke of Lerma. This minister, in spite of the chagrin he felt at hearing such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author of it? Don Diego, not satisfied with telling him, spoke so advantageously of me, that his Excellency remembered it six months afterwards, on account of a story which I am going to recount; and without which perhaps, I had never had any employment at court. It was thus:

There lived then in the Infanta's street an old lady called *Inesilla Cantarilla*: it was not certainly known what was her parentage; some said she was daughter to a lute-maker; others to a commander of the order of St. Jago; however it was, she was a prodigious person; nature had endued her with the singular privilege of charming mankind the whole course of her life, which she still enjoyed though she was seventy five years of age: she had been the idol of the nobility of the old court, and she saw herself still adored by those of the new. Time, which spares no beauty, had exercised himself in vain upon her: he might make her decay insensibly, but could not deprive her of a power to please; a noble air, a bewitching wit, and her natural graces enabled her to make conquests even in her old age.

Don Valerio de Luna, a young cavalier of twenty-five, one of the Duke de Lerma's secretaries, visited *Inesilla*, and was enamoured with her; he declared himself, acted the passionate lover, and pursued his point with all the eagerness that love and youth are capable of inspiring. The lady who had her reasons for not surrendering to his desires,

could not contrive any expedient to moderate them; at last however she thought she had found one: she carried the young man into her closet, and there shewing him a pendulum that stood upon the table: "See," said she, "what a clock it is. Seventy-five years ago at the same hour, I came into the world: in good earnest would it become me to have intrigues at my age? Recover yourself, child, stifle such sentiments as are neither proper for you nor me." At this pathetic discourse, the cavalier (who no longer obeyed the dictates of reason) answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed with the passions that agitated him. "Cruel Incilla, why have you recourse to such frivolous stratagems? Do you think they can change you in my eyes? Do not flatter yourself with such a vain hope: whether you are what you seem to be, or a charm deceives my sight, I shall not cease loving you." "Very well," replied she, "since you are obstinate enough to persist in the resolution of teasing me with your passion, my door for the future shall no more be opened to you. I forbid you my house, and charge you never more to appear before me."

You believe perhaps, after this, that Don Valerio being confounded with what he had heard, made a handsome retreat. On the contrary, he only became more importunate. Love causes, in lovers, the same effect as wine in drunkards. The cavalier entreated, and sighed, and passing on a sudden from prayers to passion, he would have had by force, what he could not get otherwise; but the lady thrusting him back with courage, said to him with an angry look: "Stop, rash wretch, I am going to curb your unlicensed frenzy: know that you are my son."

Don Valerio being thund. struck with these words, suspended his violence. But imagining that
Incilla

Inesilla only spoke to free herself from his solicitations, he answered: "You have invented this fable to rob me of my desires." "No, no," interrupted she, "I am revealing a secret, which I should have concealed for ever, had not you reduced me to the necessity of discovering it. It is twenty six years since I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia: you was the fruits of our commerce. He owned you, had you educated with care, and, besides his having no other child, your good qualities made him resolve to leave you an estate. On the other hand, I did not forsake you; as soon as I saw you make your appearance in the world, I drew you to me, to inspire you with that polite behaviour which is so necessary for a gentleman, and which women alone can instil into young cavaliers. I have done more; I used all my interest to settle you with the prime minister. In short, I have concerned myself for you, as I ought to have done for my son. After this confession take your resolution; if you can refine your sentiments, and only respect me as a mother, I shall not banish you my presence, and shall continue to have the same affection for you as I have had heretofore; but if you are not capable of this effort, which both nature and reason exact from you, fly this very minute, and deliver me from the horror of seeing you.

Thus spoke Inesilla, during which Don Velerio kept a fullen silence. One would have thought that he was recalling his virtue, and going to gain a conquest over himself: but he was meditating another design, and preparing for his mother a spectacle of a very different kind. Not being able to comfort himself for that unsurmountable obstacle that opposed his happiness, he gave way poorly to his despair. He drew his sword, and plunged it in his breast. He punished himself like

another Oedipus, with this difference that the Theban pulled out his eyes in regret for having consummated the crime; and on the contrary, the Castilian killed himself for grief that he could not commit it.

The unfortunate Don Valerio did not die upon the spot; he had time to come to himself, and ask pardon of Heaven for having himself put an end to his life. As he left, by his death, a secretary's post vacant at the Duke of Lerma's, that minister, who had not forgotten my account of the fire, no more than the encomium that had been made of me, chose me to supply his place.

CH A P. II.

Gil Blas is presented to the Duke of Lerma, who receives him into the number of secretaries, sets him to work, and is pleased with his performance.

IT was Montefier who brought me that agreeable news, telling me, "Friend Gil Blas, though I cannot part with you without regret, I love you too well not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You cannot fail of making a handsome fortune, provided you follow my counsel in two things: the first is, to seem so firmly attached to his Excellency, that he may not in the least doubt but that you are entirely devoted to his interests: and the second is, to make your court well to Signior Don Rodriguez de Calderona; for that man manages his master's temper as if he were made of wax. If you have the good fortune to get into the good graces of his favourite secretary, you may advance a great way in a little time."

"Signior," said I to Don Diego, after having given him thanks for his good advice, "be pleased to tell me, what is Don Rodriguez's character? I have sometimes heard him spoken of in the world, and they have described him to me as a very bad man;

man; nevertheless I mistrust the pictures which the populace draw of persons who are in places at court, though they sometimes judge aright. Tell me therefore I beg you, your thoughts of Calderona." "You desire a delicate thing of me," said the superintendant with a malicious smile; "I would answer any other but yourself, without hesitation, that he is a very honest gentleman, and that one cannot speak amiss of him. But I will be sincere with you. Besides my believing you a young fellow of a great deal of prudence, I think I ought to speak to you frankly of Don Rodriguez, because I have advised you to keep fair with him; otherwise I oblige you but by halves.

"You are to know then," continued he, "that from being a simple domestic to his Excellency, when he was yet but Don Francisco de Scandoval, he is advanced by degrees to the post of first secretary. Never was there known so proud a man. He looks upon himself as a colleague of the Duke of Lerma's; and at the bottom, one would think that he shared the authority with the prime minister, since he gives places and governments to whom he pleases. The public often murmur; but he does not trouble himself about that: provided he gets a present by the bargain, he values your fault-finders but very little. You may easily conceive by what I have just said to you," added Don Diego, "how you are to conduct yourself towards such an imperious wretch." "O mighty well," said I, "let me alone for that. I shall have very ill luck if I did not get into his favour. When one knows a man's blindside to whom one would make one's court, one must be very much out of the way not to succeed." "Since it is so," replied Montefier, "I will present you directly to the Duke of Lerma."

We went that moment to the minister, whom we found in a large hall, busy in giving audience.

He had more company attending him than the King. There I saw commanders, and knights of St. Jago and Calatrava, who were soliciting for governments, and viceroyalties; bishops, who not being well in their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops, only for change of air; and good Dominicans and Franciscans, who humbly requested to have bishopricks. I also observed there some reformed officers who were acting the same part as Chinchilla heretofore; that is to say, who danced attendance in expectation of a pension. If the Duke did not satisfy their desires, he at least received their petitions with an affable air; and I perceived that he answered the persons who spoke to him very politely.

We had the patience to wait till he had dispatched all these supplicants; after which Don Diego said to him: "My Lord, this is Gil Blas de Santillane, the young man whom your Excellency has chosen to supply Don Valerio's place." At these words, the Duke turning his eyes upon me, said obligingly, that I had already deserved it by the services I had done him. After this he made me go into his closet, to discourse me in private, or rather to judge of my wit by my conversation. He would know who I was, and what sort of a life I had led till then. He even required me to give a sincere account. What a task was that to ask! To lie before the prime minister of Spain; it was not to be thought. On the other hand, I had so many things to say at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve upon making a general confession. How to bring myself off in such an exigency? I resolved to plaster the truth over in such places where it would have seemed too deformed, quite naked. But he discovered it in spite of all my art. "Monsieur de Santillane," said he at the end of my account, "as far as I see, you have been a little upon the picaroon." "My Lord," replied

replied I, blushing, "your Excellency commanded me to be sincere, I obeyed you." "I am pleased with it," rejoined he; "go, friend, you are very well off. I am astonished that such ill examples did not entirely ruin you. How many honest men are there who would be great rogues, if fortune were to put them to the same trials?"

"Friend Santillane," continued the minister, "think no more of what is past. Remember that you now belong to the King, and that for the future you will work for him. Follow me, I will shew you in what your business will consist." He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his, where there were twenty thick folio registers ranged upon shelves. "It is here," said he, "that you must be employed. All these registers that you see, compose a dictionary of all the nobility in the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy: every book contains, in alphabetical order, an abridgment of the history of all the gentlemen of one kingdom, wherein there is a particular account of the services themselves or their ancestors have rendered the state, all well as the duels they have fought. There is also an account of their estates, their behaviour, and, in a word, of all their good and bad qualities: so that when they come to ask any favour at court, I see at one view whether they deserve it. That I may be exactly informed of all these things, I have pensioners every where, who take care to have a good intelligence, and to acquaint me therewith by memorials which they send me for that purpose. But as these memorials are prolix, and full of a country-dialect, they must be digested into order, and the language polished, because the King has sometimes these registers read to him. It is at this business, which requires a clear and concise style, that I will set you to work immediately."

Having thus said, he drew out of a large etter-case

case full of papers, a memorial which he put into my hands. Then he went out of my closet, to leave me at liberty to make my first essay. I read over the memorial, which seemed not only to be stuffed with barbarous terms; but even too full of passion. Nevertheless it was compiled by a monk of Solsona. He defamed a good Catalonian family therein most unmercifully, and heaven knows whether he said the truth. I thought I was reading a libel, and at first made a scruple of going to work upon it. I was afraid of rendering myself an accomplice to a malicious aspersi^on; nevertheless, as great a novice as I was at court, I went through with it at the hazard and peril of his Reverence's soul; and laying all the iniquity to his charge, if there was any, I began to dishonour in good Spanish, two or three generations, who were perhaps honest men.

I had already done four or five pages, when the Duke, impatient to see how I went on, came back, and said, " Santillane, shew me what you have done. I am very desirous of seeing it." At the same time, casting his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning very attentively. He seemed so well satisfied with it, that I was surpris^{ed} thereat. " As much prejudic^{ed} as I was in your favour," cried he, " I own you have surpass^{ed} my expectation: you not only write with all the clearness and exactness that I required; but I also find your style easy and pleasant: you justify very well the choice I have made of your pen, and you comfort me for the loss of your predecessor." He had not sto^pt here, if his nephew the Count de Lemos had not come and interrupted him. His Excellency embrac^{ed} him several times, and received him after a manner that convinc^{ed} me he loved him tenderly. They shut themselves both up, to talk in secret of a family-affair, whereof I shall make mention hereafter.

hereafter. The minister was more taken up therewith, at that time, than with the King's business.

Whilst they were together, I heard it strike twelve. As I knew that the secretaries and clerks left their offices at that hour, to go and dine where they pleased; I left my masterpiece there, and went out; not to Montefers's, he had paid me my wages, and I had taken my leave of him; but to the most famous ordinary near the court: a common eating-house would not serve me any longer. "Remember you belong now to the King;" these words which the Duke had spoke to me, were the seeds of ambition which were springing up every moment in my mind.

C H A P. III.

He is informed that his post is not without inconveniencies; of the trouble this news gives him, and how he is forced to behave himself.

I WAS very careful, on my going in, to inform the master of the house, that I was secretary to the first minister; and, in that quality, I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid to ask for any thing that bordered upon good husbandry, wherefore I bid him get what he would. He treated me very well, and they served me with such respect, as was more agreeable to me than my good cheer. When the reckoning was to be paid, I threw a pistole upon the table, whereof I gave the overplus, which was at least a quarter, to the servants. After this, I went out from the ordinary, strutting like a young fellow who was very well pleased with his person.

About twenty steps from thence was a large house ready furnished, where foreign noblemen usually lodged. There I hired an apartment of five or six rooms, handsomely set off with good hangings, and other goods suitable to them. It
seemed

seemed as if I had already been master of two or three thousand ducats a-year; I even paid down the first month's rent beforehand. This done, I returned to my work, and spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. In a closet next to me were two other secretaries; but these only copied over what the Duke brought them to transcribe. I got acquainted with them that very night as we left business; and that I might the better gain their friendship, I carried them to my ordinary, where I ordered the best dishes in season with the most exquisite wines.

We sat down at table, and began to converse with more life than wit; for to do my guests justice, I soon perceived they did not owe their places in the office to their genius; they were masters indeed of a very good round and mixed hand, but had not the least smattering of any university-learning.

To make amends, they understood their own little concerns to a miracle; and were not so dazzled with the honour of belonging to the prime minister, but that they lamented their condition. "It is now six months," said one, "that we have been labouring at our own expense: we do not receive a farthing; and what is worse, our salaries are not fixed. We do not know upon what foot we are." "As for me," replied the other, "I wish I had twenty lashes for my salary, and leave to look for business elsewhere; for I dare neither go off myself, nor ask my dismissal, after the secrets to which I have been privy. I might very likely take a trip to see the tower of Segovia, or the castle of Alicant."

"How do you manage then to live?" said I to them; "no doubt you must have some estate?" They answered me, "that they had very little, but that, luckily for them, they lodged with an honest widow who trusted them, and boarded each of
them

them for 100 pistoles *per annum*. All this discourse, of which I did not lose a word, humbled my proud imagination in a moment. I represented to myself, that without doubt no more consideration would be had for me than for others: that, consequently, I ought not to be so charmed with my post; that it was less solid than I believed it: and, in fine, that I could not manage my purse too much. These reflections cured me of the madness of throwing away my money: I began to repent my having brought the secretaries there, and to wish for the end of the supper; and when the reckoning came in, I had a dispute with the landlord about it.

We parted at midnight, because I did not press them to drink any more. They went to their widow's, and I to my stately apartment, which I then was enraged at my having hired, and resolved to quit at the month's end. It was in vain for me to lie in a fine bed, my disquiet had banished sleep. I spent the rest of the night in contriving how to avoid working for the King *gratis*. Hereupon I followed Montefers's counsel. I rose with an intent to go wait upon Don Rodriguez de Calderona. I was in a very proper temper to appear before so proud a man: I found I wanted him: wherefore I went to this secretary's.

His lodging was adjoining to the Duke of Lerma's, and equalled it in magnificence. It would have been hard, by the furniture, to have distinguished the master from the valet. I sent in word, that I was Don Valerio's successor. That did not prevent my being made wait above an hour in the antechamber. "Good Mr. Secretary," said I to myself during that while, "have a little patience if you please. You must dance attendance yourself, before you can make others do so."

However at last the chamber-door was opened: I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodriguez, who having just finished a billet-doux to his charming

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ing Sirena, gave it that minute to Pedrillo. I never appeared before the Archbishop of Grenada, nor Count Galiano, nor yet before the prime minister with that respect as when I approached Signior Calderona. I saluted him with a bow down to the ground, and begged his protection in such terms as I cannot now remember without blushing, they were so very submissive. My mean behaviour would have made against me, had I had to do with a man of less pride. As for him, he was very well pleased with my cringing, and told me, with a pretty civil air, that he would take all opportunity to do me service.

Hereupon, returning him thanks for his favourable sentiments, with all the demonstrations of zeal imaginable, I vowed that I would devote myself eternally to his service. After this, I went out for fear of incommoding him, begging him to excuse me, If I had interrupted him in his important affairs. Having taken this unworthy step, I retired to my office, where I finished the work that had been set me. The Duke did not fail coming in the morning, and was not less satisfied with the end than the beginning of my performance, but said, "It is very well. Write on of yourself, as well as you can, the abridgment of the Catalonian register: after which you may take another memorial out of the letter-case, which you may digest after the same manner." I had a pretty long conversation with his excellency, with whose familiar easy air I was entirely charmed. What a difference between him and Calderona! they would have made two good figures in a group.

I dined that day at an eating-house where they kept a table at a settled price, and I resolved to go there every day *incognito*, till I saw the effect of my complaisance and condescension. I had money at most but for three months. I allowed myself that time to work at my own expense; proposing, after
that

that, (since the shortest follies are the best), to abandon the court and its glittering tinsel, if I could not receive any salary. Wherefore I laid my scheme thus. I spared no pains for two months to please Calderona; but he took so little notice of all I did for that purpose, that I despaired of ever gaining my point. Wherefore I altered my behaviour with respect to him; I made my court no longer to him; and only applied myself to make the best use of the moment's conversation wherewith the Duke honoured me.

C H A P. IV.

Gil Blas gains the Duke of Lerma's favour, who intrusts him with an important secret.

ALTHOUGH the Duke only appeared to me, (if I may use that expression), and vanished again every day, it did not prevent my rendering myself insensibly so agreeable to his Excellency, that he said one afternoon: "Hark you, Gil Blas, I like your genius, and have a kindness for you. You are an affectionate faithful young fellow, of a good understanding, and discreet; I think I shall not misplace my confidence in reposing it in you." I threw myself at his feet on hearing these words, and having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me, answered: Is it possible your Excellency should condescend to honour me with so great a favour? What secret enemies will your goodness stir up against me! But I only fear the heat of one man; that is, Don Rodriguez de Calderona."

"You need apprehend nothing from him," replied the Duke, "I know Calderona. He has been attached to me ever since my childhood. I dare say his sentiments are so conformable to mine, that he will cherish whatever I love, as he hates every thing that displeases me. Instead of fearing
his

his aversion, you ought on the contrary to depend upon his friendship. I found by this that Signior Don Rodriguez was a cunning sharper, who had made himself master of his Excellency's favour, and that I could not keep too fair with him.

"To begin," continued the Duke, "to put you in possession of my confidence, I am going to discover to you a design I have upon the anvil. It is necessary you should be informed of it, that you may discharge well the commission I intend afterwards to give you. It is now a long time since my authority has been generally respected, and my resolutions blindly followed; as also that I have disposed at pleasure of posts, employments, governments, viceroalties, and benefices. I reign, if I durst venture to say so, in Spain. I cannot push my fortune any further. But I would secure it from the storms that begin to threaten it; and for this reason I could wish to have my nephew the Count de Lemos for my successor in the ministry."

"His Excellency observing that I was very much astonished at this part of his discourse, said to me; "I see very well, Santillane, what surprises you. It seems strange to you that I prefer my nephew to the Duke d'Uzeda, my own son. But know that the genius of the latter is too narrow to enjoy my place, and that, besides, I am his enemy. He has found out the secret to please the King, who designs to make him his favourite; and that is what I cannot suffer. The favour of a crowned head is like the possession of a woman one adores. It is a happiness whereof one is so jealous, that one cannot resolve upon sharing it with a rival, how nearly soever one is united to him by blood or friendship.

"Here," continued he, "I shew you the very bottom of my heart. I have already tried to undermine the Duke d'Uzeda in the King's favour;
and

and as I have not been able to compass my design, I have formed another stratagem. I would have the Count de Lemos, on his side, insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being lord of the bedchamber, he has an opportunity of conversing with him at all hours; and besides his having a good deal of wit, I have an infallible way to make him succeed in this undertaking. By this stratagem I shall set up my nephew against my son, and shall create a division between these cousins which will oblige them both to court my protection; and the need they will have of my interest will render them both subject to me. This adds he, "is my scheme; and your assistance therein will be of use to me. I will send you secretly to the Count de Lemos, and you shall bring me back word of all he has to impart to me."

After this confidence, which I looked upon as ready money, I had no longer any disquiet. "At last," said I, "I am in the way of preferment, it will rain gold upon me. It is impossible but the confident of a man who is called the great drum of the Spanish monarchy, must soon wallow in riches. Full of these flattering hopes, I saw my poor purse hasten to its end with a great deal of indifference.

CHAP. V.

*Where one shall see Gil Blas filled with joy and honour,
and overwhelmed with misery.*

IT was soon perceived that I was in the prime minister's favour. He affected to give me marks of it in public, by making me carry his porto-folio, which he before used to do himself when he went to council. This novelty causing me to be looked upon as a little favourite, stirred up the envy of several, and made me receive abundance of court
holy-

holy-water. My two neighbours, the secretaries, were none of the last in complimenting me upon my approaching grandeur, and inviting me to supper at their widow's, not so much by way of return, as with a view of engaging me to do them some service in the end. They congratulated me on all hands; even the haughty Don Rodriguez altered his behaviour. He now always called me *Signior de Santillane*; he that before never stiled me but *you*, without using the term *Signior*. He tired me with his civilities, especially when he thought our master observed him. But I will assure you he had no fool to deal with; I returned his compliments the more politely, in that I hated him the most; an old courtier could not have acquitted himself better.

I also attended the Duke when he waited on the King, whether he generally went thrice a-day. He visited his Majesty in the morning, as soon as he was awake, and kneeling down at his bed's head, informed him what he had to do that day, and dictated to him what he was to say; after which he withdrew. He returned again when his Majesty had dined, not to talk of business, but to divert him with merry conversation. He would entertain him with all the pleasant adventures that happened at Madrid, with which he was always the first acquainted. In fine, at night he again saw the King, to give him what account he pleased of all he had done that day, and asked him, in a careless way, his orders for the next. I staid in the antechamber, whilst he was with his Majesty, where I was surrounded with persons of quality, who, being desirous of getting into favour, courted my conversation, and hugged themselves that I would give them the hearing. After all this, how could I avoid thinking myself a man of consequence? There are several persons at court, who imagine themselves so with less reason.

One day, I had yet more cause to be vain: the Duke having spoken advantageously of my style to the King, he had the curiosity to see a specimen of it. His Excellency making me take the register of Catalonia, carried me before that monarch, and bid me read the first memorial I had digested. If that prince's presence put me at first into some confusion, that of the prime minister soon encouraged me, and I read my performance, with which his Majesty was very well pleased. He expressed himself satisfied with me, and even charged his minister to take care of my fortune. This did not abate the pride I had already; and the conversation I had a few days afterwards with the Count de Lemos, put the last stroke to the filling my head with ambitious notions.

I went to wait on that nobleman, from his uncle, at the Prince of Spain's, and I presented him with a credential letter, wherein the Duke informed him that he might open himself to me, as being a man perfectly acquainted with their design, and one who was pitched upon to be their common messenger. Having read this note, the Count conducted me into a chamber, where we both shut ourselves up: and there he began this discourse: "Since you are confident to the Duke of Lerma, I do not doubt but you deserve it, and I ought to make no difficulty of reposing the same trust in you. You must know then that things go the best in the world. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen that make their court to him, and study to please him. I was in private with him this morning, and he seemed concerned that the King's covetousness rendered him incapable of following the bent of his generous inclinations, and even of making a figure suitable to a prince. Hereupon I did not fail to lament his misfortune, and taking hold of that opportunity, I promised to bring him a thousand pistoles to morrow at his levee, till I could procure larger

larger sums with which I have undertaken to supply him. He was charmed with my promise, and I am sure, if I keep my word, of getting into his favour. Go to my uncle and tell him all these circumstances, and come back to-night to inform me what he thinks thereupon.

I left the count de Lemos when he had thus spoken, and returned to the Duke of Lerma, who, upon my giving him this account, sent to Calderona for a thousand pistoles, wherewith I was intrusted that night, and which I carried to the Count, saying to myself as I went, "O ho, I see now what is the infallible way the minister takes to succeed in his enterprize; faith he is in the right, and in all appearance this prodigality will not ruin him. I can easily guess out of whose coffers he takes these fine pistoles; but after all, is not it reasonable, that the father should maintain the son? The Count de Lemos, on my taking leave of him, whispered me, "Adieu my dear confident; the Prince of Spain loves the fair sex a little, we must have a conference together thereupon the first opportunity. I foresee that I shall soon want your assistance." I went away ruminating on these words, which were not ambiguous in the least, and filled me with joy. "What the deuce," said I, "am I just upon being made the Mercury to the heir to the crown!" I did not in the least examine whether the office was good or bad; the quality of the gallant banished my morals. What a glory was it for me to be a great prince's minister of his pleasures? "Not so fast, Mr. Gil Blas!" somebody will cry, "You was only to be deputy-minister." I agree to it, but at the bottom these two posts are equally honourable; only the profit is different.

Whilst I was thus discharging these noble commissions, and getting daily more and more into the prime minister's good graces, with all the finest
I hopes

hopes in the world, I should have been happy if ambition could have kept me from hunger. I had got rid of my magnificent apartment above two months, and lodged in one of the most ordinary rooms ready furnished. Although this troubled me, yet as I went out early in the morning, and did not return till night to lie there, I bore it patiently. I was all day in my element, that is to say, at the Duke's, where I acted the part of a lord. But when I retired to my dog hole, my lordship vanished, and there only remained poor Gil Blas without money, and which was worse, without any thing that would raise any. Besides my being too proud to discover my wants to any one, I knew nobody but Navarro, and I had neglected him too much since my being at court, to dare address myself to him. I had been obliged to sell my things piece by piece, and I had nothing left but what I could not any way spare. I went no more to the eating house, for want of money to pay my ordinary. What shift did I make then to subsist? They brought us every morning a little roll, and a glass of wine for our breakfast in the office. This was all that the minister allowed us. I only eat that all day, and went to bed at night most commonly without supper.

This was the condition of a man that made a figure at court, but who ought rather to have been pitied than envied. However I could no longer endure my misery, and I resolved at last to discover it with address to the Duke de Lerma, whenever I could find an opportunity. By good luck, I met one at the Escorial, whither the King and Prince of Spain went some days after.

CHAP. VI.

How Gil Blas discovered his misery to the Duke de Lerma, and after what manner that minister treated him.

WHEN the King was at the Escorial, he bore every one's charges that attended him, so that I did not then feel where the shoe pinched me. I lay in a wardrobe near the Duke's Chamber; and this minister rising one morning by break of day according to custom, bid me take some papers and an inkhorn, and follow him into the palace-gardens. We went to sit down under some trees, where I put myself, by his order, in the posture of one that writes upon the crown of his hat, and he held a paper in his hand, as if he was reading. We seemed at a distance to be about business of importance, and nevertheless we were only talking of trifles.

I had been diverting his Excellency above an hour, by all the flights wherewith my gay temper furnished me, when two magpies coming and settling upon the trees that covered us with their shade, began to chatter after such a loud manner, that they attracted our attention: "You fluttering birds," said the Duke, "that seem to quarrel, I should be curious enough to know the cause of your difference." "My Lord," said I, "your curiosity makes me remember an Indian fable that I have read in Pilpay, or some other writer of fables." The minister asked me what it was, and I related it to him in the terms following.

"A monarch formerly reigned in Persia, who not having capacity enough to govern his dominions himself, left the care thereof to his Grand Vizier. This minister, whose name was *Atalmuc*, was a man of a superiour genius. He supported the weight of this vast monarchy without sinking under

under it. He preserved it in a profound peace. He had even the art of rendering the regal authority amiable, by making it respected, and the subjects were happy in having an affectionate father, in a vizier who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had amongst his secretaries a young Cachemirian, called *Zeangir*, whom he loved more than the rest. He took pleasure in his company, took him with him a-hunting, and discovered to him even his inmost thoughts. One day as they were hunting in a wood, the Vizier observing two ravens croaked upon a tree, said to his secretary: "I should be glad to know what these birds say in their language." "My Lord," replies the Cachemirian, "your wishes may be accomplished." "And how?" rejoined Atalmuc. "Because," replied *Zeangir*, "a dervise who was a cabalist taught me the birds language; if you desire it, I will listen to these, and repeat to you word for word what I hear them say."

The Vizier consented. The Cachemirian drew near the ravens, and seemed to lend an attentive ear to them; after which, returning to his master, he said: "My Lord, would you believe it? we were the subject of their conversation," "It is impossible," cries the Persian minister: "Well, and what say they of us?" "One of them," rejoined the secretary, "said, There he is, the Grand Vizier Atalmuc; that tutelary eagle that covers Persia with his wings, as if it were his nest, and watches continually for its preservation. There he is hunting in this wood with his faithful *Zeangir*, to refresh himself after his painful toils. How happy is that secretary to serve a master who shows him a thousand favours?" "Softly," cries the other raven, interrupting him, "softly. Do not boast so much of the Cachemirian's good fortune. Atalmuc, it is true, converses with him familiarly, honours him with making him his confidant, and I

do not doubt but he even designs to give him some considerable employment ; but before that time comes, Zeangir will be starved. That poor wretch lodges in a little ready furnished room, where he wants the greatest necessaries. In short, he leads a miserable life, without any one's perceiving it at court. The Grand Vizier does not think of inquiring into his circumstances, but contenting himself with having a regard for him, lets him fall a victim to poverty."

I left off speaking here, to see how the Duke of Lerma took it ; who asked me with a smile, what impression this fable made upon Atalmuc's mind, and whether the Grand Vizier was not offended with his secretary's boldness. " No, my Lord," says I, a little confounded at his question ;" on the contrary, the story says, that he loaded him with benefits." " That was lucky," replied the Duke, with a serious air ; " there are ministers who would not take such lessons well. But," continued he, breaking off the discourse, " I believe the king will not be long before he wakes ; my duty calls me to him." At these words he walked hastily towards the palace, and seemed to be very much displeased with my Indian fable.

I followed him to his Majesty's chamber-door ; after which, I went to lay my papers in the place whence I took them. This done, I went into a closet where our two secretaries were at work, for they were also come with us. " What is the matter, Signior de Santillane?" said they on seeing me ; " you are very much moved ; has any disagreeable accident happened to you ?"

I was too full of the ill success of my fable, to hide my trouble from them. I made them a recital of what I had said to the Duke, and they appeared sensible of the lively grief with which I seemed to be seized. " You have reason to be chagrined," said one of them, " can you think to be better treated

treated than a secretary of Cardinal Spinosa's? This secretary being weary with receiving nothing in fifteen months that he had been employed by his Eminence, took the liberty one day to represent his necessities to him, and to ask him for some money for subsistence. "It is just," said the minister, "that you should be paid; there," continued he, putting in his hands a warrant for a thousand ducats, "go and receive that sum at the royal treasury; but, at the same time, remember that I want no more of your service." The secretary would have comforted himself for his being dismissed, if he had received the thousand ducats, and been left to look for employment elsewhere: but on his leaving the Cardinal's he was seized by an alguazil, and conducted to the tower of Segovia, where he remained prisoner a long while."

This little story redoubled my terrour, I thought myself lost, and not being able to comfort myself, I began to reproach my impatience, as if I had not endured enough. "Alas!" cried I, "why did I run the hazard of this cursed fable, which has displeased the minister? perhaps he was upon the point of extricating me from my miserable condition. Perchance I was going to make one of those sudden fortunes that surprise the world. What riches, what honours have I lost by my folly? I ought to have reflected, that there are great men who do not love to be anticipated, and who will have one receive as a favour from them, even the least things that they are obliged to give. I had better have continued my diet, without saying any thing to the Duke, and even have starved, that I might have laid all the blame on his side.

If I had retained yet some glimpse of hope, the sight of my master, after dinner, would have destroyed it entirely. He was very serious with me, contrary to his custom, and did not speak to me at

all. This gave me, all the rest of the day, a mortal disquiet, neither did I spend the night in more ease. The regret of seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the fear of increasing the number of state-prisoners, made me do nothing but sigh and complain.

The next was the critical day; the Duke had me called in the morning; I entered his chamber trembling more than a criminal who is going to judgment. "Santillane," said he, shewing me a paper he had in his hand, "take this warrant"—I shuddered at the word *warrant*, and said to myself, "O Heavens! here is the Cardinal Spinola, the coach is ready for Segovia." The terror I was in at that instant was so great, that I interrupted the minister, and throwing myself at his feet: "My Lord," said I, all bathed in tears, "I humbly beg your Excellency to pardon my boldness: it was my necessity forced me to inform you of my misery."

The Duke could not forbear laughing at the disorder wherein he saw me. "Be of good heart, Gil Blas," replied he, "and hearken to me. Although the discovering your wants, was reproaching me for not having prevented them, yet I do not take at it all amiss of you; I rather am angry with myself for not asking you how you lived. But to begin to make amends for this indiscretion, I give you a warrant for 1500 ducats, which will be paid you at sight, at the royal treasury: this is not all, I promise you as much every year; and besides, when any persons that are rich and generous, desire you to do them a service, I do not forbid your speaking in their favour."

These words threw me into such a rapture, that I kissed the feet of the minister, who commanding me to rise, continued to discourse me. On the other hand, I would have recovered my gay temper, but I could not so soon make a transition from
grief

grief to joy. I remained as confounded as a malefactor who hears them cry a reprieve, the moment that he expected the fatal stroke. My master ascribed all my disturbance only to the fear of having displeased him, although the apprehension of a perpetual imprisonment had at least as great a share herein. He confessed that he had affected to look cool upon me, to see if I should be very sensible of the change; that he judged by that of my attachment to his person, and liked me the better.

CHAP. VII.

Of the good use he made of his 1500 ducats: of the first affair wherein he engaged, and of the profit he got by it.

THE King, as if to comply with my impatience, returned on the morrow to Madrid. I immediately flew to the royal treasury, where I as soon received the sum contained in my warrant. I then gave ear to nothing but my ambition and vanity. I left my miserable ready-furnished dog-hole for the secretary's who did not yet understand the language of birds, and hired a second time my fine apartment, which by good fortune happened to be empty. I then sent for a famous tailor, who worked for almost all the fops: he took my measure, and carried me to a woollen-draper's, where we bought five ells of cloth, which he said he must have to make me a suit: five ells for Spanish dress! Just Heavens! But do not let us criticise thereupon. Tailors who are in reputation, always take more than others. I afterwards bought some linen, whereof I was in great want, with silk stockings, and a beaver laced with a Spanish open lace.

After this, as I could not well be without a footman, I desired my landlord Vincent Forero to recommend me one. Most part of the foreigners

who lodged with him used, when they came to Madrid, to hire Spanish servants. This did not fail to draw all the footmen that were out of service to his house. The first that offered was a young fellow of such a mild religious air, that I would not have him. I thought I saw Ambrose de Lamela. "I do not love," said I to Forero, "a footman with such a sanctified look; I have been caught so already.

I had hardly refused this fellow, but another came in. This seemed very sharp, with more impudence than a court-page, and to that a little roguish. He pleased me: I asked him some questions, to which he gave pertinent answers; I even observed that he was intriguing. I looked upon him as a man fit for my turn, and hired him, of which I had no reason to repent, for I soon perceived that I had got an admirable bargain. As the Duke had given me leave to speak to him in favour of persons whom I had a mind to serve, and as I had no intention to neglect this permission, I wanted a spaniel to hunt out the game; I mean an arch fellow that was industrious, and fit to find out and bring me such persons as had favours to ask of the prime minister. This was just *Scipio's* masterpiece: that was my footman's name: he came from Donna Anna de Guevara, the Prince of Spain's nurse, where he had exercised that talent very much.

As soon as I had informed him of my interest, and that I should be glad to make use of it, he took the field, and that very day he told me: "Sir, I have made a pretty good discovery. There is a young gentleman of Grenada just arrived at Madrid, whose name is *Don Roger de Rada*. He has fought a duel, which obliges him to have recourse to the Duke of Lerma's protection; and he is willing to pay well for doing him that service. I have spoke to him. He had a mind to have addressed himself to Don Rodriguez de Calderona, whose

whose power has been cried up to him : but I have deterred him, by acquainting him, that the secretary sold his good offices at an extravagant rate, whereas you would be satisfied with a handsome acknowledgment for yours ; that you would even do a service for nothing, if the condition of your affairs would allow you to follow your generous and disinterested temper. In short, I have spoken after such a manner that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning." " How," said I, " Mr. Scipio, you have already done a great deal of business : you are no novice at intriguing ; I wonder you are no richer." " That ought not to surprize you," replied he ; " I love to make money circulate, I do not hoard.

Don Roger de Rada came accordingly, and was received with a politeness intermixed with haughtiness. " Signior Cavalier," said I, " before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honour that brings you to court; for it may happen to be of that nature, that I may not dare to intercede for you with the prime minister. Therefore I desire you to give me a true account of it, and be assured that I will espouse your interest very heartily, if a man of honour may appear therein. " With all my heart," replied the young Grenadian, " I am going to make you a sincere recital of my history." At the same time he recounted it after the following manner.

CH A P. VIII.

The history of Don Roger de Rada.

DON Anastasio de Rada, a gentleman of Grenada, lived very happily in the city of Antequera, with Donna Estephania his spouse, who with solid virtue, had a mild temper, and was a woman of exquisite beauty. If she loved her husband tenderly, it was returned with equal passion. He was

naturally very much inclined to jealousy; and although he had no reason to suspect his wife's fidelity, he was nevertheless uneasy. He was apprehensive lest some private enemy to his repose, should make an attempt upon his honour. He grew diffident of all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, to whom his house was open, as being Estephania's cousin, and who was the only one of whom he had no mistrust.

In effect, Don Huberto fell in love with his cousin, and was so bold as to declare his passion, without having regard to the blood that united them, or to Don Anastasio's particular friendship. The lady, who was discreet, instead of making a clamour, which might have had fatal consequences, reprehended her relation mildly, representing to him the hainousness of the crime, to attempt to seduce her and dishonour her husband; and telling him very seriously, that he ought not to flatter himself with any hopes of success.

This moderation only served to inflame the cavalier the more; for imagining that he ought to try a woman of her character to the utmost, he began to be disrespectful in his behaviour, and had the assurance one day to press her to satisfy his desires. She repulsed him with a severe air, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rashness. The spark, being terrified with this menace, promised to talk no more to her of love; and upon the credit of this promise, Estephania forgave what was past.

Don Huberto, who was naturally a great villain, could not see his passion so ill repaid, without conceiving a base desire of avenging himself. He knew Don Anastasio to be a jealous man, susceptible of any impressions he would make upon him. He wanted no more to form the blackest design of which a miscreant could be capable. One evening, as he was walking alone with this weak husband, he said to him with the most melancholy air in the
without

world: "My dear friend, I can live no longer without revealing a secret, which I should be cautious of discovering, if your honour were not more dear to you than your rest. But your delicacy and mine in point of offences will not suffer me to conceal any longer what is done at your house. Prepare to hear an account which will cause in you as much grief as surprise. I am going to wound you in your tenderest part."

"I understand you," replied Don Anastasio, already quite confounded, your cousin is false to me." "I no longer acknowledge her for my cousin," rejoined Hordales, with a passionate air; "I disown her, and she is unworthy of having you for her husband." "You make me languish too long," cried Don Anastasio. "speak, what has Estephania done?" "She has betrayed you?" replied Don Hubert. "You have a rival whom she favours secretly, but I cannot name him to you; for the adulterer escaped the eyes that watched him, by the favour of a dark night. All that I know is, that they deceive you. It is a thing whereof I am assured. The interest that I ought to take in this affair, is but too certain a proof for you of the truth of my report. Since I declare myself against Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity.

It is in vain," continued he, observing that his discourse produced the desired effect, "it is in vain to say any more to you. I perceive that you are undeserving of the ingratitude wherewith your love is repaid, and that you are meditating a just revenge. I shall not oppose you, do not examine who is the victim you are going to strike; shew the whole city, that there is nothing but what you can sacrifice to your honour."

Thus did the traitor animate a too credulous husband against an innocent wife; and he painted to him in such lively colours the infamy wherewith he would be covered, if he let the affront go unpunished,

punished, that at last he put him in a rage. Behold Don Anastasio deprived of judgment. He seems as if possessed by the furies. He returns home with a resolution to stab his unhappy wife, who was just stepping into bed when he arrived.

He constrained himself at first, and waited till the domestics were withdrawn. But then, without being restrained by the fear of the anger of Heaven, or the dishonour that it would reflect upon an honest family; or even by the natural pity he ought to have had for a child, wherewith his wife was six months gone; he approached his victim, and said in a furious tone: "Wretch, thou must perish; thou hast but one moment longer to live, and that is owing to my goodness, that thou mayst beg Heaven to forgive thee the outrage thou hast done me. I would not have thee lose thy soul, as thou hast lost thine honour."

This said, he drew his poinard. His action and discourse terrified Estephania; so that throwing herself at his knees, wringing her hands, and quite confounded, she said, "What is the matter, my Lord? What reason have I had the misfortune to give you to be dissatisfied? why would you deprive your spouse of her life? If you suspect her of not being faithful to you, you are in an error."

"No, no," replied the jealous wretch, "I am but too well assured of your treason. The persons who informed me are of worth, Don Huberto"

———"Ah, my Lord!" said she, interrupting him with precipitation, "you ought to distrust Don Huberto: he is not so much your friend as you imagine. If he told you any thing reflecting upon my virtue, do not believe him." "Hold your tongue, you infamous woman," replied Don Anastasio, "by endeavouring to prepossess me against Hordales, you rather justify than remove my suspicions. You attempt to render me mistrustful of this relation, because he is acquainted with
with

with your ill conduct. You would weaken his evidence, but this artifice is useless, and redoubles my inclination to punish you." "My dear husband, replied Estephania, weeping bitterly, "be upon your guard against your blind passion, whose dictates if you follow, you will never forgive yourself, when you shall once know the wrong you do me. For God's sake calm your anger; at least give yourself time to clear up your suspicions. It will only be doing justice to a woman who has nothing wherewith to reproach herself.

Any other but Don Anastasio would have been moved at these words, and yet more at the affliction of the person who pronounced them; but the barbarian, far from seeming to relent, bid the lady a second time recommend herself to God speedily; and even lifted up his arm to strike her. "Stop, barbarian," cried she. "If the love you formerly bore me is entirely extinct; if all the marks of tenderness, of which I have been so profuse, are blotted out of your remembrance: if my tears cannot deter you from your execrable design, at least have regard for your own blood. Do not arm your furious hand against an innocent who has not yet seen the light. You cannot be its executioner without offending both heaven and earth. As for me, I forgive you my death; but be assured his will cry for justice for so enormous a crime."

As resolute as Don Anastasio was not to hearken to whatever Estephania should say, he could not help being moved at the horrible ideas which these last words brought into his mind. Accordingly, as if he was afraid lest this shock should get the better of his resentment, he made haste to take advantage of what fury remained in him, and plunged his poniard into his wife's left side. She fell down that moment, and he believing her dead, immediately left his house, and disappeared from Antequera,

In the meanwhile this unfortunate spouse was so stunned with the wound she had received, that she remained some minutes lifeless upon the ground. After which, recovering her spirits she made such complaints and lamentations as drew an old woman that served her to her assistance. This good old creature seeing her mistress in so piteous a condition, sent forth such cries, as soon awakened the other domestics, and even the next neighbours. The chamber was quickly full of company. They sent for surgeons, who examining the wound had no ill opinion of it. They were not mistaken in their conjectures. Estephania was even cured in a short time, and delivered happily of a son three month after this adventure. And in me, Signior Gil Blas, you behold that son, I am the fruits of that melancholy labour.

Although slander seldom spares a woman's character, it yet shewed a regard to my mother's; and this bloody scene was looked upon in the town but only as the transport of a jealous husband. It is true my father was known to be of a violent temper, and apt easily to take umbrage at any thing. Hordales judged very rightly that his cousin suspected him of having disturbed Don Anastasio's mind by his falsities, and contenting himself with being at least half revenged of her, he left off visiting her. I shall not enlarge upon the education that was given me, for fear of tiring your patience; I shall only say, that my mother chiefly took care of my learning to fence well, and that I pushed a long time in the most famous schools of Grenada and Seville. She impatiently waited till I was of age to measure my sword with Don Huberto, that she might inform me what reason she had to complain of him; and finding me at last in my eighteenth year, she intrusted me with it, not without shedding a flood of tears, and being seized with a live'y grief. What impression cannot

a mother make in this condition, upon a son who has courage and natural affection? I immediately went to find out Hordales, and carried him to a private place, where, after a pretty long combat, I ran him thrice through, and left him upon the spot.

Don Huberto feeling himself mortally wounded, fixed his dying eyes upon me, and owned that he had received death at my hands as a just punishment for the offence he had committed against my mother's honour. He confessed that he had resolved to ruin her, to revenge himself of her rigour. After this he expired, asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me. I did not think it proper to return home, to inform my mother of the issue I left that to fame. I crossed the mountains, and went to Malaga, where I embarked on board a privateer who was going to cruize. I seemed to him not to want courage, and he consented willingly to my joining with the brave fellows he had on board.

We were not long before we found an occasion to signalize ourselves. We met near the isle of Albouran, a corsair of Melilla; who was returning to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish vessel, richly laden, which he had taken off of Carthage. We attacked the African briskly, and made ourselves masters of his two ships, wherein were four score Christians whom he was carrying slaves to Barbary. Then taking advantage of a gale that sprung up, and was fair for the coasts of Grenada, we arrived in a little time at Punta de Helena.

As we inquired of the slaves we had delivered of what place they were, I asked the same question of a man of an excellent mien, and who might very well be fifty years old. He answered sighing, that he was of Antequera. I found myself touched with his reply, without knowing any reason for it; and my emotion, which he perceived, caused a disturbance in him, which I could not help observing.

serving. "I am," says I to him, "your fellow citizen. May not one ask the name of your family?" "Alas!" replied he, "you renew my grief, by requiring me to satisfy your curiosity. It is eighteen years since I quitted Antequera, where I ought only to be remembered with horror. Perhaps you have yourself only heard me too much talked of. My name is *Don Anastasio de Rada*." "Good heaven!" cried I out, "may I believe what I hear? What, is it Don Anastasio, is it my father whom I see?" "What do you say, young man?" cried he out in his turn, observing me with surprise, "is it possible? can you be that unfortunate child with whom your mother was big, when I sacrificed her to my fury?" "Yes, father," said I, "it was me that the virtuous Estephania brought into the world, three months after that fatal night wherein you left her weltering in her blood."

Don Anastasio did not wait for my finishing these words, before he threw himself about my neck. He embraced me in his arms, and we did nothing but intermingle our sighs and tears for a quarter of an hour. Having given ourselves up to the tender motions which such an interview could not but excite in us, my father lifted up his eyes to heaven, to return thanks for the saving of Estephania; but the moment after, as if he had been afraid his thanks were unreasonable, he asked me which way his wife's innocence had been discovered. "My Lord," said I, "nobody but yourself ever doubted of it. Your spouse's conduct has always been irreproachable. It is time you are disabused: know it was Don Huberto who imposed upon you." At the same time I informed him of that relation's perfidiousness, how I had been revenged, and what he had confessed to me at his death.

My

My father was less sensible of the joy of having recovered his liberty, than of the pleasure of hearing such news. He began again to embrace me tenderly with transports of joy, and was never tired of expressing how well he was satisfied with me. "Come, my son," said he, "let us immediately take the road to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have treated so unworthily. Since you have let me know the wrong I have done her, my heart bleeds with remorse."

I had too great a mind to bring again together two persons so dear to me, to defer the happy minute. I left the privateer; and bought at Adra two mules, with the money I received for my part of the prize, my father being no longer willing to expose himself to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough upon the road to relate to me all his adventures, to which I listened with the same eager attention which the prince of Ithaca gave to his father when reciting his. In short, after several days journey, we reached the bottom of the mountain next to Antequera, where we halted. As we intended to get home as privately as possible, we did not enter the city till the middle of the night.

I leave you to imagine my mother's surprise at seeing a husband whom she thought lost for ever; and the miraculous manner, if I may use that expression, that he was restored to her, was another subject for her wonder. He asked her pardon for his barbarity, with such lively marks of repentance, that she could not help being moved. Instead of looking on him as an assassin, she only regarded him as a man to whom heaven had subjected her. So sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman.

Estephania had been so much in pain for me, that she was charmed at my return. Nevertheless her joy was not sincere; a sister of Hordales took out a criminal process against her brother's murderer,
and

and had me pursued every where. So that my mother finding I was not safe in our house, was not without disquiet. This obliged me to set out for court that very night, whither I am come, Sir, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since you are willing to intercede for me with the first minister, and make use of all your interest.

Here Don Anastasio's brave son finished his relation. After which, I said to him with an air of importance. "It is enough, Signior Don Roger, your case seems pardonable. I take upon me to give his Excellency an account of your affair, and dare venture to promise you his protection." The Grenadian, upon that, lanced out in compliments, which had only gone in at one ear and out at the other, if he had not assured me, that his acknowledgment should immediately follow the service I should render him. But as soon as he had touched upon that string, I set about it in earnest. I told the Duke the story that very day, who having permitted me to present the cavalier to him, said: "Don Roger, I am apprised of the affair that has brought you to court: Santillane has informed me of all the circumstances. Set your mind at rest, you have done nothing but what is excusable; his Majesty loves particularly, to pardon such gentlemen as revenge their offended honour. You must go to prison for form; but be assured, that you shall not stay long there. Santillane is your good friend, and shall take care of the rest. He shall hasten your enlargement.

Don Roger made a low bow to the minister upon whose word he surrendered himself prisoner. His pardon was soon dispatched by my care, and in less than ten days I sent this new Telemachus to rejoin his Ulysses and Penelope: whereas if he had not had a protector, perhaps he had not been released in a year. I had for this but an hundred

pistoles

pistoles; it was no great catch, but I was not yet a Calderona to despise trifles.

CHAP. IX.

By what means Gil Blas made a great fortune in a little time; and of the great airs he gave himself.

THIS affair made me relish the business; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio for brokerage, encouraged him to go anew upon the scent. I have already extolled his talent at it; one might justly have called him *Scipio the Great*. The second chapman he brought me was a printer of books of chivalry, who had got an estate in defiance of good sense. This printer had pirated another's copy, and his edition had been seized. For three hundred ducats, I had his books repleved, and saved him a heavy fine. Although this did not regard the first minister, his Excellency at my desire was willing to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant fell into my clutches, and upon this account: A Portuguese vessel had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and was retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two thirds of her lading belonged to a Lisbon merchant, who, having in vain reclaimed it, was come to the court of Spain, to find a protector who had interest enough to get it restored. I interposed for him, and he regained his effects, upon paying four hundred pistoles, whereof he made a present for the protection.

Methinks I hear a reader cry at this place, "Courage, Santillane, put hay in your coach-box, you are in a fine road, push your fortune." "Oh! I will take care of that. If I am not mistaken I see my footman coming with a new customer whom he has just hooked in. Even so, it is Scipio. Let us hear what he says." "Sir," cries he, "suffer me to present you this famous operator. He desires a patent for selling his drugs for ten years through
all

all the cities of Spain, exclusive of all others; that is to say, that all persons of his profession may be prohibited settling in the places where he resides; and he will, as an acknowledgment, give two hundred pistoles to the person that gets the patent dispatched." I told the mountebank, protector-like, "Go your ways, friend, I will do your business." In effect, a few days after, I sent him back with a patent that gave him an exclusive power to cheat the people through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Besides my growing more covetous, in proportion as I grew richer, I had obtained these four favours so easily of his Excellency, that I made no scruple of asking a fifth. It was the government of the city of Vera, on the coast of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava, who offered me 1000 pistoles. The minister fell a-laughing to see me so keen after the game. "Good God, friend Gil Blas," said he, "after what rate you go on! You are prodigiously fond of obliging your neighbour. Harken, when you ask only for trifles, I shall not observe you so narrowly; but, when you want governments, or other considerable things, you must be satisfied, if you please, with half the profit. You shall be accountable to me for the other. You cannot imagine," continued he, "at what expense I am forced to be, nor to how many shifts I am put to support the dignity of my post; for, in spite of the disinterestedness I put on to the eyes of the world, I own to you I am not fool enough to confound my domestic affairs. Depend upon that."

My master, by this discourse, taking away all fear of importuning him, or rather encouraging me to make more frequent demands, rendered me yet more greedy of riches than I was before. I should then willingly have posted it up, that all those who wanted any favours at court, should address themselves to me. I went one way, Scipio another, seeking only how to do any one a service for his money.

My

My knight of Calatrava had the government of Vera for his thousand pistoles, and I soon obtained another at the same price for a knight of St. Jago. Nor was I satisfied with making governors, but I bestowed orders of knighthood, and converted some good yeomen into bad gentlemen, by excellent coats of arms. I was also willing the clergy should be sensible of my benefits, and conferred some small benefices, made canons, and some other dignitaries of the church. As to archbishoprics and bishoprics, Don Rodriguez de Calderona was the patron that bestowed them. He also had the naming of magistrates, commanderies, and viceroalties. This makes me suppose, that the great places were no better filled than the small ones. For the persons whom we chose to fill the posts, whereof we made such a pretty traffic, were not always the most able men in the world, nor the most regular. We knew very well that the sneerers at Madrid made themselves merry thereupon at our expense; but we were like the misers, who comfort themselves for the hollowing of the populace, by looking at their gold.

Isocrates had reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of riches. When I saw myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a way perhaps to get ten times as much. I thought myself obliged to make a figure suitable to the confidence of the first minister. I hired a whole house, which I furnished handsomely. I bought the coach of an Escrivano who had set it up out of ostentation, and who was endeavouring to part with it by the advice of his baker. I hired a coachman, with three footmen, and, as it is just to promote one's old domestics, I advanced Scipio to the threefold honour of being my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what swelled my pride to the height was, that the minister thought fit for my men to wear his livery. I lost what sense I had left.

I was

I was full as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who having, by drinking cummin, made themselves as pale as their master, imagined themselves as learned as he; I was within a little of thinking myself a relation of the Duke of Lerma's; at least I fancied I should pass for such, or for one of his bastards, which flattered my pride infinitely.

Besides this, I resolved to keep an open table, after his Excellency's example, who kept open house. For this reason I ordered Scipio to provide me a good cook, and he found me one, who perhaps was comparable to that of Nomentanus of dainty memory. I filled my cellar with delicious wines, and having laid in my other stores, I began to receive company. Every night I had some of the head-clerks of the minister's offices to sup with me, who haughtily took upon them the quality of secretaries of state. On the other hand Scipio (for like master like man) had also his table in the buttery, where he entertained his acquaintance at my expense. But besides my loving the fellow, as he contributed to my getting money, he seemed entitled to help me to spend it. Add to that, I looked upon this waste with the eyes of a young man. I did not see the hurt it did me. The benefices and other employments continued to bring grist to my mill. I saw my treasury increase daily; I imagined that for this time I had fixed a nail in fortune's wheel.

Nothing was wanting to my vanity but to have Fabricio a witness of my splendid living. I did not doubt but he was returned from Andalusia, and that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, I sent him an anonymous letter, wherein I wrote him word, that a nobleman of Sicily who was his friend, expected him at supper. I appointed the day, the hour, and the place of rendezvous, which was at my house. Nunez came, and was extraordinarily surprised to find that I was the strange nobleman,

nobleman, who had invited him to supper. "Yes, friend," said I to him, "I am master of this house, I have an equipage and good table, and, what is more, a strong box." "Is it possible," cried he out briskly, "that I find you again in opulency? How glad am I that I placed you with Count Galiano! I said he was a generous nobleman, and would not be long before he made you easy in your circumstances. Undoubtedly," added he, "you have followed the good counsel I gave you, to wink a little at the steward. I congratulate you upon it. It is only by this conduct that the comptrollers grow so warm in great houses."

I let Fabricio applaud himself as long as he pleased, for having recommended me to Count Galiano. After which, to moderate his joy for having procured me so good a post, I recited to him the marks of gratitude wherewith that nobleman had repaid my services. But, observing that my poet, during this relation, sung a recantation within himself, I said, "I forgive the Sicilian his ingratitude. Under the rose, I have more reason to congratulate myself than complain. If the Count had not used me ill, I had followed him into Sicily, where I should still have served him, in expectation of an uncertain settlement: in short, I should not have been the Duke of Lerma's confident."

Nunez was so much surpris'd at these last words, that he remained some moments speechless. Then breaking silence on a sudden: "Did I hear right?" said he. "What, are you intrusted with the prime minister's secrets?" "I share his confidence," replied I, "with Don Rodriguez de Calderona; and, according to all appearances, I shall go a great way." "Indeed, Signior de Santillane," rejoined he, "I admire you. You are capable of discharging all sorts of employments. What talents! You have (to use an expression of us poets), you have the *universal tool*, that is to say, you are good at every thing.

thing. As for the rest, my Lord," continued he, "I am overjoyed at your Lordship's prosperity." "O the devil," said I, interrupting him, "Monsieur Nunez, truce with you my Lord, and your Lordship: let us banish those terms, and live always familiarly together." "You are in the right," replied he; "I ought not to look upon you with any other eye than ordinary, though you are become rich. I will confess my weakness; I was dazzled at hearing of your good fortune; but the mist is vanished, and now I only see my friend Gil Blas."

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks: "Gentlemen," said I, presenting Nunez to them, "you shall sup with Signior Don Fabricio, who makes verses worthy of King * Numa, and writes in prose, as nobody writes." As ill luck would have it, I spoke to persons who valued poetry so little, that the poet suffered for it. They hardly deigned to cast their eyes on him. It was in vain for him to say fine things to draw their attention; they had no taste for them. He was so much piqued at it, that he took a poetical licence; he got silyly out of the company, and disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retiring, but sat down to table even without inquiring what was become of him.

Next morning as I had made an end of dressing me, and was just upon going out, the Asturian poet entered my chamber. "I ask your pardon, friend," said he, "if I disoblige your clerks; but, to deal freely, I was so much out of my element, that I could not stay. What haughty wretches with their conceited stiff looks! I cannot imagine how you, who have bright parts, can suit yourself to such dull company. To night," continued he, "I will bring you some of a better taste." "You will oblige me therein," replied I, "and I trust to your

* The obscure verses which the Salian priests sung in their processions, were composed by Numa.

judgment." "You are in the right," rejoined he; "I promise you some of the brightest and most diverting genius. I am going directly to a chocolate-house where they will meet in a moment, and I will bespeak them, for fear they should be engaged elsewhere; for every one strives who shall have them to dinner or supper, they are so very pleasant companions."

At these words he left me, and at night at supper time he came only accompanied with six authors, whom he presented to me one after another, making their respective encomiums. To have heard him, these wits surpassed the most celebrated writers of Greece and Italy, and their works (as he said) deserved to be written in letters of gold. I received the gentlemen very politely, and even affected to overwhelm them with civility, for the nation of authors is a little vain and conceited. Although I had not ordered Scipio to take care that the table should be plentifully furnished, yet, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat, he had made an addition to each course.

In short, we sat down to table very merry. My poets began to extol and cry up themselves. One, with a haughty air, quoted the great lords and women of quality who were ravished with his muse. Another, blaming the choice that an academy of learned men had just made of two members, said very modestly, that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the others was not less presuming. In the middle of supper they stunned me with their verse and prose. Every one round began to recite a specimen of his writings. One repeats a sonnet, another a scene of tragedy; a third reads a criticism upon a comedy. A fourth, being willing in his turn to rehearse an ode of Anacreon, translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who tells him he has made use of an improper term. The author of the version will by

no means agree to it. Thence arises a dispute, wherein all the wits engage. They are divided in their opinions; the disputants grow hot; they fall to invectives: as to that, it was tolerable, but the furious madmen rise from table, and fall to boxing. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, footman, and myself, had no small trouble to part them; which as soon as we had done, they went out of my house as if it had been a tavern, without making me the least excuse for their incivility.

Nunez, upon whose word I had promised myself to spend the evening very agreeably, remained quite confounded at this adventure: "Well," says I, "friend, will you again cry up your guests? Faith, you have brought me scurvy companions. For my part, I will keep to my clerks; speak no more to me of authors." "No, I will take care," replied he, "not to introduce any more; you have seen the most reasonable of them."

CHAP. X.

Gil Blas is entirely corrupted at court. Of the commission given him by the Count de Lemos, and of the intrigue wherein that nobleman and he engaged themselves.

AS I was known to be the Duke of Lerma's favourite, I soon had a number who made their court to me. My antechamber was every morning crouded with suplicants, to whom I gave audience at my levee. These consisted of two sorts. The one came to engage me to use my interest for them with the prime minister, for which they were willing to gratify me: the others endeavoured to induce me by their supplications and prayers to obtain what they desired *gratis*. The first were sure of being favourably heard and well served. As for the second, I either got rid of them immediately by evasions and pretences, or amused them so long that

that I made them lose their patience. Before my coming to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but when one is once there, one has no longer any humanity, and I became as hard as a flint. Consequently I was cured of my sensibility for my friends, I put off all affection for them. The manner of my using Joseph Navarro in a juncture which I am going to relate, will confirm it.

This Navarro, to whom I was so much obliged, and who (to say all at once) was the first cause of my fortune, came to me one day. Having expressed a great deal of friendship for me, as he was used to do whenever he saw me, he begged me to ask a certain employment of the Duke de Lerma, telling me that the cavalier for whom he solicited was a young gentleman of great worth and merit, but that he was in need of a post whereon to subsist. I do not at all doubt," continued he, "but as I know you to be obliging and good-humoured, you will be glad of doing a service to an honest gentleman who is not rich. I am sure you will thank me for giving you an opportunity to exercise your generous temper." This was telling me plainly that this piece of service was expected for nothing. Although this was not at all to my relief, I nevertheless seemed entirely disposed to do what was desired of me. "I am overjoyed," replied I to Navarro, "that I am able to give you a proof how much I am sensible of all you have done for me. It is enough that you make interest for any one; that is sufficient to determine me to serve him. Your friend shall have the employment you desire, depend upon it; it is now no longer your business, it is mine."

Joseph went away very well satisfied upon this assurance. Nevertheless the person he so much recommended had not the place in question. I obtained it for another for a thousand ducats which

I put in my strong box. I preferred this sum to all the thanks my clerk of the kitchen would have given me, and said with a mortified air, when we met again, "Ah my dear Navarro, you thought of speaking to me too late. Calderona has prevented me, he has given the employment you mentioned to another. I am in despair that I have no better news for you."

Joseph believed me sincerely, and we parted better friends than ever; but I fancy he soon discovered the truth, for he came near me no more. I was glad of it; for, besides his services lying heavy upon me, I thought that in the station wherein I was at court, it was no longer proper for me to keep company with stewards.

The Count de Lemos has been forgotten a good while; let us now return to him. I sometimes waited on him. I had carried him a thousand pistoles, as has been said before, and I carried him a thousand more by the Duke his uncle's order, out of money I had of his Excellency's. That day the Count de Lemos was pleased to have a long conversation with me, and informed me that he had at last attained his desires, that he was the sole favourite and confident of the Prince of Spain. After this he intrusted me with a very honourable commission, for which he had before prepared me. "Friend Santillane," said he, "now you must bestir yourself. Spare no pains to find out some young beauty worthy to entertain a gallant prince. You do not want for wit, I shall say no more; run, fly, hunt, and when you have made a fortunate discovery, come and acquaint me. I promised the Count to be indefatigable in the discharge of this employment, which ought not to be very difficult, since so many undertake it."

I was not greatly used to this sort of office, but I did not doubt Scipio's being admirable at this likewise. Hereupon when I came home, I called
him

him apart, and told him, "My boy, I have a secret of importance to impart to you. Do you know, that, in the midst of fortune's favours, I find something wanting?" "I can easily guess what it is," said he, interrupting me, without giving me time to finish my discourse. "You would have an agreeable nymph to divert and enliven you. In short, it is a wonder that you have not already had one in the prime of your years, when old grave fellows cannot be without." "I admire your penetration, replied I, smiling. "Yes, friend, it is a mistress I want, and I will have one of your procuring. But I must tell you, I am very nice in this point. I must have a pretty girl, who has no jilting tricks." "You ask," replied Scipio, "something uncommon; nevertheless, thank Heaven, we are in a city, where there are some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon find one for your purpose."

Accordingly three days afterwards he told me, I have discovered a treasure. There is a young lady, called *Catalina*, of a good family, and an enchanting beauty, who lives under the government of her aunt, in a little house where they live very reputably upon their substance, which is not considerable: I am acquainted with their Abigail, and she has just assured me, that their door, though not open to any one, may however give admittance to a gallant who is rich and generous, provided, for fear of scandal, he will only come thither at night; and without making any noise. Hereupon I have described you as a cavalier who deserves admission any where, and have begged Mrs. Chambermaid to propose you to the two ladies: she has promised me to do it, and bring me an answer to-morrow to a place agreed on between both," "That is very well," replied I; "but I am afraid the wench has imposed upon you." "No, no," replied he, "I am not a man to be put upon; I have already enquired of the neighbours, and from

what they have told me, I conclude that Sennora Catalina is a Danae, with whom you may play the Jupiter, at the price of a golden shower."

As much as I was prejudiced against this kind of good fortune, I caught at this; and as the maid came the next day to tell Scipio, that it should be my own fault if I was not introduced to the ladies that very night, I slipped thither between eleven and twelve. The wench received me without any light, and led me by the hand into a pretty handsome parlour, where I found the ladies genteely dressed, and sitting upon satin cushions. As soon as they perceived me, they rose, and saluted me with such a noble air, that I thought I saw two persons of quality. Though the aunt, whose name was *Signiora Menica*, was still beautiful, she did not attract my eyes. It is true, her niece drew all one's attention, and yet, upon a strict examination, one might have said, that she was not a nonpareille; but she had so many charms, with such an inviting piquant air, that it was impossible for a man to observe her defects.

Accordingly her sight dazzled my senses: I forgot that I was come hither to solicit for another, I spoke for myself, and entertained her with all the passion of a man deeply enamoured; and the little gypsey, whom I thought thrice as witty as she really was, (so agreeable she seemed in my eyes), completed her conquest by her answers. I began to be no longer master of myself, when the aunt interrupted us, and spoke after this manner to moderate my transports. "Signior de Santillane, I am going to explain myself freely. I have given you admittance upon the good character I have had of you, without attempting to enhance the value of this favour by a great many ceremonies. But do not think you are ever the nearer for that; I have hitherto brought up my niece very retired, and you are (as one may say), the first cavalier who has had
a sight

a sight of her. If you think her worthy of being your spouse, I shall be overjoyed at her having that honour; consider if you like her at that price, you can have her at no other."

This home-stroke sent young Cupid packing, just as the urchin was going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage proposed so bluntly brought me to myself. I immediately became a faithful agent to the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, I made Sennora Mencia this answer. "Madam, I like your freedom, and I will imitate it. Whatever figure I make at court, I do not deserve the incomparable Catalina; I have a more glorious offer in store for her, I design her for the Prince of Spain." "It was enough to refuse my niece," replied the aunt coolly, "that refusal, to my thinking, was sufficiently disobliging; there was no need of adding to it by your unseasonable raillery." "I do not rally, Madam," cried I, "nothing is more serious: I have orders to find a person worthy of receiving the Prince of Spain. I have met her in your house, I set you down in my books."

Signiora Mencia was very much surprised at these words which I perceived did not displease her: nevertheless thinking she ought to appear upon the reserve, she answered me in this manner. "Were I to believe you in earnest, I would have you know that I am not a woman to be proud of the infamous honour of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue is shocked at the idea."—"You are a very pretty creature," said I, interrupting her, "with your virtue! You talk like a foolish cit. What, do you banter, to look upon these things in a moral light? It is depriving them of all their beauty. One must view them with a favourable eye; think you see the heir of the crown at the feet of the fortunate Catalina; represent him to yourself adoring her, and loading her with presents; and

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imagine,

imagine, that perhaps she may bring forth a hero who may immortalise both his own name and his mother's."

Though the aunt desired no better than to accept my proposal, she pretended not to know upon what to resolve; and Catalina, who would even then have been glad to have been sure of the Prince of Spain, affected to be very indifferent; which made me begin afresh to lay siege to the fort, till at last, the aunt finding me discouraged, and ready to rise from before the town, beat a parley, and we drew up a capitulation which contained the following articles:

First, that if the Prince of Spain took fire upon the report that should be made him of Catalina, and should resolve to visit her by night, I should take care to inform the ladies, as also of the time appointed for that purpose.

Secondly, That the Prince should not be introduced thither but as an ordinary gallant, and that only attended by me and his head Minister of pleasure.

After this agreement, the aunt and niece shewed me all the kindness imaginable, and even assumed a familiar air, by which being encouraged, I ventured to clasp them in my arms, which was not very ill received: and as we were parting, they embraced me of themselves with all the fondness in the world. It is wonderful to see how easily your procurers, and the nymphs who want them, become acquainted. One would have sworn, to see me go away in such favour, that I had been happier than I was.

The Count de Lemos was overjoyed, when I told him I had made such a discovery as would charm him. I gave him such a character of Catalina, as made him desirous to see her; upon which I carried him the next night, and he owned I had made an excellent choice. He told the ladies, that he did
not

not in the least doubt but the Prince of Spain would be very well satisfied with the mistress I had pitched upon, and that, on the other hand, she would have reason to be pleased with her lover; that the young Prince was generous, and of an exquisite sweet temper: in short, he assured them, that in a few days he would bring him just as they desired, that is to say, without any noise or retinue. Hereupon the nobleman took his leave of them, and I withdrew with him to his equipage wherein we both came, and which waited for us at the end of the street. After this he set me down at my house, charging me to inform his uncle the next morning of this beginning of our adventure, and to beg him, in his name, to send him a thousand pistoles to put the finishing stroke to it.

I did not fail going the next day to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of all that had passed. I concealed but one thing, I did not mention a word of Scipio; I pretended myself to be the discoverer of Catalina; for one assumes the honour of every thing to one's self amongst great men.

By this I drew some compliments upon myself. "Mr. Gil Blas," says the minister, with a rallying air, "I am overjoyed, that, with all your other talents, you have also that of hunting out beauties who are willing to oblige; when I want one, be pleased to allow me to address myself to you." "My Lord," answered I in the same tone, "I thank you for the preference; but suffer me to tell you, that I should make a scruple of procuring your Excellency these sorts of pleasures. Signior Don Rodriguez has so long been in possession of that employment, that it would be an injustice to supplant him." The Duke smiled at this answer; then, changing the discourse, he asked if his nephew did not want money for this expedition. "Pardon me," said I; "he begs you to send him a thousand pistoles." "Well then," replied the

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. minister,

minister, "you have nothing to do but to carry them; bid him not spare them, but humour the Prince in all the expenses he pleases to desire.

C H A P. XI.

Of the secret visit and presents the Prince of Spain made to Catalina.

I WENT that very hour to carry five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos. "You could not have come more *à propos*," said that nobleman. "I have spoken to the Prince; he has bit at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. He will steal out of his palace this very night in order to go thither. It is a thing resolved on. We have already taken our measures for that purpose. Inform the ladies of it, and carry them the money you have brought me; it is good to shew them that they are to receive no ordinary lover; besides, a Prince's favours ought always to precede his gallantries. As you are to attend him with me, be sure to be to-night at his couchee; besides, I think it proper to use your coach; let it wait for us at midnight near the palace."

I went immediately to the ladies, but did not see Catalina; they said she was gone to lie down. I spoke only to Sennora Mencia. "Madam," said I, "I beg you would excuse my appearing at your house in the day, but I could not help it. I must inform you, that the Prince of Spain will be here to night; and here," continued I, putting into her hands a bag wherein was the money, "here is an offering which he sends to the temple of Venus to render the goddess propitious. You see I have not engaged you in an ill affair." "I am obliged to you," replied she; "but tell me, Signior de Santillane, does the Prince love music?" "O yes," rejoined I, "to distraction; nothing charms him more than a fine voice, accompanied with a lute finely touch-
ed."

ed." "So much the better," cried she, transported with joy, "you rejoice me in so saying, for my niece sings like a nightingale, and touches a lute to perfection. She even dances exquisitely." "Good God!" cried I in my turn, "these are a great many accomplishments, aunt! A woman need not have so many to make her fortune; one of these talents is sufficient for that."

Matters being thus prepared, I waited the hour of the Prince's couchee; which being come, I gave my coachman his instructions, and rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me that the Prince would feign a slight indisposition to get the sooner rid of all company, and that he would even go to bed, to persuade them the better that he was sick; but that he would rise again in an hour, and would come by a private door, down the back stairs, that led into the court-yard.

Having thus instructed me in what had been concerted between them, he posted me in a place by which he assured me they must pass. I danced attendance so long, that I began to think our gallant had taken another way, or had lost the desire of seeing Catalina; as if princes did not retain such fancies till they had satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgotten me, when I was accosted by two men, whom finding to be those I wanted, I conducted them to my coach, wherein they both got. As for me, I sat by the coachman to serve him for a guide, and made him stop about fifty paces from the ladies. I gave my hand to the Prince and his companion, to help them down; after which we walked to the desired house, the door whereof opened at our approach, and was shut as soon as we were got in.

We were at first in the same darkness as I was the first time; though, to make some distinction, they had fastened a little lamp to the wall, but the light it cast was so dull, that we could only perceive it.

without having any benefit from it. All this only served to render the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was deeply smitten at the sight of the ladies, when they received him in a parlour illuminated with a vast number of tapers, which made amends for the darkness that reigned in the courtyard. The aunt and the niece were in a gallant dishabille, wherein was such a mixture of coquetry, as made it not safe to see them. Our Prince would have been very well contented with the Sennora Mencia, if he had not had choice ; but the charms of the young Catalina carried the day, as in reason they ought.

“ Well, my Prince,” said the Count de Lemos, “ could we have procured you the pleasure of seeing two handsomer persons ?” “ I think them both ravishing,” replied the Prince ; “ and I should be very sure not to carry my heart back again, since it could not escape the aunt, if the niece could possibly fail of the conquest.”

After a compliment so gracious for the aunt, he said a thousand soft things to Catalina, who answered him with a great deal of wit. As such honest fellows as act the part I did, are allowed to join in conversation with the lovers, provided it is to add fuel to the fire, I told the gallant that his nymph sung and played on the lute to perfection. He was charmed at hearing she had these talents, and pressed her to give him a specimen. She yielded gracefully to his entreaties, and, taking a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung after such a moving manner, that the Prince fell at her feet quite transported with love and pleasure. But let us draw the curtain over this picture. I shall only add, that the heir to the crown of Spain was plunged in such a soft bewitching ecstasy, that hours seemed as moments, and we were obliged to force him from this dangerous house, because of the approach of day. The gentlemen-undertakers carried him

him quickly back to the palace, and left him in his apartment. They went afterwards to their own lodgings, as well satisfied with having fitted him with a jilt, as if they had concluded his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I acquainted the Duke of Lerma with this adventure, for he would be informed of all; and, as I was finishing the recital, the Count de Lemos came in, and told us: The Prince of Spain is so much charmed with Catalina, and has taken such a fancy to her, that he proposes to visit her often, and keep to her. He would have sent her two thousand pistoles worth of jewels, but he has not the money. He has addressed himself to me: "Dear Lemos," said he, "you must procure me that sum immediately. I know very well that I put you to an inconvenience, and drain you: accordingly I esteem myself very much obliged to you, and, if ever I am in a capacity to acknowledge, any other way than by my affection, all that you have done for me, you shall not repent your having obliged me." "My Prince," said I, "I have friends and credit; I will fetch you what you desire."

"It is not hard to satisfy him," said the Duke to his nephew; "Santillane shall bring you the money; or, if you will, he shall himself buy the jewels, for he is a perfect judge of them, especially of rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas?" continued he, looking at me with a malicious smile. "How ill natured are you, my Lord!" replied I. "I see you have a mind to make the Count merry at my expense." It was just so. The nephew asked what mystery was therein. "Nothing," replied the minister laughing; "only Santillane thought fit one day to change a diamond for a ruby, and this exchange proved neither to his honour nor advantage."

I had been too happy if the minister had said no more,

more, but he took the pains to relate the trick which Camilla and Don Raphael had played me in a ready-furnished lodging, and to enlarge particularly upon the most disagreeable circumstances. His Excellency, having diverted himself sufficiently, ordered me to attend the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's, where we chose the precious stones, which we went to shew the Prince; after which they were intrusted with me to carry them to Catalina. This done, I went to my lodging to fetch two thousand pistoles of the Duke's money to pay the jeweller.

It is needless to ask whether I was received graciously next night, when I produced the presents of my embassy, which consisted of a fine ring for the aunt, and a pair of pendants for the niece. Being both charmed with these marks of the Prince's love and generosity, they began to talk like a couple of parrots, and to thank me for having procured them such a good acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and let fall some words which made me suspect that I had helped our great monarch's son to a cheat. That I might be assured whether I had performed this fine masterpiece, I withdrew with a design to come to an eclaircissement with Scipio.

C H A P. XII.

Who Catalina was. The perplexity of Gil Blas, his disquiet, and what precaution he was obliged to take to compose his mind.

WHEN I got home, I heard a great noise, and, upon asking the cause, was told that it was Scipio, who that night was entertaining half a dozen friends at supper. They sung as if they would rend their throats, and broke out into such long fits of laughter, that I am well assured this was none of the banquets of the seven wise men.

The

The master of the feast being informed of my arrival, said to his company : " Gentlemen, it is nothing ; only my patron is come home. Do not let that constrain you. Be merry still ; I will but speak two words to him, and return to you in a moment." At these words he came to me : " What a noise is there ?" said I. " What sort of people are you treating below ? Are they poets ?" " No indeed," replied he, " it would be a pity to throw away your wine upon such fellows. I make a better use of it. I have among my guests a young man who is very rich, and desires your interest to get him an employment, for which he will pay you. The entertainment is for him ; every glass he drinks I increase the present he is to make you ten pistoles, and I will keep him to it till day." " O ! upon that footing," says I, " get you gone to your company, and do not spare my wine."

I did not think it at all seasonable to mention any thing to him then of Catalina ; but, next morning when I rose, I spoke to him thus : " Friend Scipio, you know after what manner we live together : I rather use you like a companion than a domestic ; for which reason you would be in the wrong to cheat me as a master : therefore let us have no secrets between us : I am going to inform you of a thing that will surprise you ; and you, on the other hand, shall tell me what you think of the two women with whom you have brought me acquainted. Under the rose, I suspect them to be two sharpers, and by so much the more cunning, as they affect so much simplicity. If I do them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to commend me, for I own it was for him I asked you for a mistress. I have carried him to Catalina, and he has fallen in love with her." " Sir," replied Scipio, " you use me too well for me to be insincere with you. I had yesterday a private conversation with these two heroines waiting women, who told me their history, which

which seemed to me diverting. I will relate it to you succinctly.

"Catalina," continued he, "is daughter to a little Arragonian gentleman; being left at fifteen an orphan as poor as she is pretty, she gave ear to an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having rather lived with her like a father than a husband. She gathered together her inheritance, which consisted of some cloaths, and three hundred pistoles in ready money; after which she entered into a league with Sennora Mencia, who was still passable, though upon the decline. These two good friends lived together, and began to keep such a house that the officers of justice would have taken cognisance of it. This displeased our two adventurers, so that out of spite they quitted Toledo very abruptly, and came to settle at Madrid, where they have lived for about two years, without visiting any lady in the neighbourhood. But hear the best of it; they have hired two little houses, separated only by a wall; one may go from one to the other by a stair-case that has a communication with both in the cellars. Sennora Mencia lives in the one with a young chambermaid, and the commander's dowager has the other with an old duenna whom she makes pass for her grandmother. So that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes an orphan educated under the wing of her grandmother. When she acts the part of the niece, she is called *Catalina*; and when she passes for the grandchild, she is named *Sirena*."

At the name of *Sirena*, I interrupted Scipio, and turned pale. "What is it you tell me?" said I. "Alas! I am afraid this cursed Arragonian is Calderona's mistress." "Yes indeed," replied he, "it is the very same; I thought you would rejoice at hearing this news." "You do not think what you say," answered I; "it is more likely to cause

me

me trouble than joy: do not you see the consequence?" "No, faith," rejoined Scipio. "What misfortune can happen? Don Rodriguez is not sure of discovering what passes; and, if you are afraid he should, you have nothing to do but to prepossess the minister against him. Acquaint him with the whole affair sincerely; he will see your honesty; and, if Calderona should attempt after that to do you ill offices with his Excellency, he will find that he only endeavours to hurt you out of a spirit of revenge."

Scipio, by this discourse, banished all my fear. I followed his counsel, and informed the Duke of Lerma of this fatal discovery. I even affected to put on a melancholy air in giving him this account, to persuade him that I was extremely mortified at having innocently procured the mistress of Don Rodriguez for the Prince; but the minister, far from pitying his favourite, did but make a jest of it. After this, he bid me go on my way, and said, that, after all, it was a glory for Calderona to love the same lady as the Prince of Spain, and to be no worse treated than him. I also related the case to the Count de Lemos; who assured me of his protection, if the first secretary should happen to find out the intrigue, and attempt to undermine me in the Duke's favour.

Thinking by this management that I had delivered my bark from shipwreck, I no longer feared any thing; I again attended the Prince to Catalina, *alias* the handsome Sirena's, who had art enough to find excuses to keep Don Rodriguez at a distance, and rob him of those nights she was obliged to give to his illustrious rival.

C H A P. XIII.

Gil Blas continues to act the lord. He hears news of his family. What impression it makes upon him. He quarrels with Fabricio.

I HAVE already said, that my antechamber was crowded with persons who came to make me proposals. But I would not receive them by word of mouth; but, following the custom of the court, or rather to make myself seem a man of importance, I said to each petitioner; "Give me a memorial in writing." I was so used to this, that I repeated one day the same to my landlord, who came to tell me that I owed him a year's rent. As for my butcher and my baker, they spared me the pains, they were so exact in bringing in their bills every month. Scipio (who aped me so well, that one might have said that the copy equalled the original) used persons in the same manner who addressed themselves to him, to desire him to engage me to serve them.

I had yet another ridiculous custom, for which I do not pretend to excuse myself: I was fool enough to speak of the greatest noblemen, as if I had been one of their rank. For instance, if I had occasion to name the Duke d'Offuna, the Duke d'Alba, or the Duke de Medina Sidonia, I said without ceremony d'Alba, d'Offuna, and Medina Sidonia. In short, I was become so proud and so vain, that I had forgot my father and mother. Alas! poor duenna, and poor gentleman of the horse, I never inquired whether you lived happily or miserably in Asturia! I did not so much as think of you. The court has the virtue of the river Lethe; it makes us forget both our parents and friends when they are in a low condition.

I thought then no more of my family, when a young fellow came to me one morning, who said that he wanted to speak to me one word in private.

I carried

I carried him into my closet, and, without offering him a chair, because he seemed of common rank, I asked him what he would have with me. "Signior Gil Blas," said he; "what, do not you recollect me?" It was in vain for me to observe him attentively; I was obliged to tell him that his features were utterly unknown to me. "I am," replied he, "one of your countrymen, born even at Oviedo, and son to Bertrand Muscada the grocer who lives near your uncle the canon. I remember you very well; we have both of us played together a thousand times at * Gallina Ciega."

"I have but a confused idea," answered I, "of the amusements of my infancy; the cares that have since taken up my time have banished them my memory." "I am come to Madrid," said he, "to reckon with my father's correspondent; I heard talk of you; and was informed that you was well settled at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you thereupon, and shall overjoy your family, at my return, by acquainting them with such agreeable news."

I could not handsomely dispense with asking in what condition he had left my father, mother, and uncle; but I acquitted myself so coolly, that I gave the grocer no reason to admire the force of nature. He seemed shocked at the indifference which I shewed for persons who ought to have been so dear to me; and as he was a downright clownish lad, "I thought," said he bluntly, "you had more tenderness and affection for you relations. With what a cool air do you inquire after them? Know that your father and mother are still in service, and that the good canon Gil Perez is going to his grave loaden with years and infirmities. One must have natural affection; and, since you are in a condition to do service to your parents, I advise you as a friend to send them every year two hundred pistoles.

* Blind man's buff.

You

You will make their lives easy and happy by this supply, without incommoding yourself."

Instead of being moved at the description he gave of my family, I was only offended with the liberty he took to advise me without my desiring it. Perhaps he might have persuaded me with more address; but he only incensed me by his freedom. He perceived it by my sullen silence, and continuing his exhortations more out of malice than charity, I grew impatient. "O! it is too much," replied I in a passion: "Go, Mr. Muscada, meddle only with what concerns you. It is very fit for you to instruct me in my duty. I know better than you what I have to do on this occasion." Having finished these words, I thrust the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to Oviedo to sell pepper and cloves.

However, what he had said to me made an impression upon my mind; and, reproaching myself for being an unnatural son, I began to relent. I called to remembrance the care they had taken of me and of my education in my infancy. I represented to myself what I owed to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some grateful transports, which nevertheless ended in nothing. My ingratitude quickly stifled them, and they were succeeded by a profound oblivion. There are many fathers who have children of the same stamp.

My temper was entirely changed by the avarice and ambition which possessed me. I lost all my gaiety. I became thoughtful and melancholy; in a word, an ass. Fabricio, seeing me entirely taken up with the care of sacrificing all to fortune, and very much disengaged from the friendship I had for him, very seldom troubled me with his company. He could not even forbear telling me so one day: "In truth, Gil Blas, you are no more the same man. Your mind was always easy before you came to court; now you are in a continual hurry. You
form

form project upon project to enrich yourself, and the more money you get, the more you covet. Besides this, shall I speak it to you? you have no longer that open heart, that free behaviour, where-in the charms of friendship consist: on the contrary, you are reserved, and hide from me the inward recesses of your soul. I even observe that your civilities are constrained. In short, Gil Blas is no more the same Gil Blas who was my acquaintance."

"Without doubt you jest," replied I, with a cool air: "I do not perceive any alteration in myself." "It is not by your own eyes," said he, "that you must be judged; they have a mist before them. Believe me, the metamorphosis is but too real. Speak to me sincerely, friend, do we converse together as formerly? When I used to knock at your door in a morning, you would come and open it yourself, oftentimes half asleep, and I entered without ceremony. But what a difference to day! you have footmen; and I must wait in the antechamber till my name is carried in. After all this, how do you receive me? With a frozen complaisance, as if you was a lord. One would think that my visits began to grow troublesome; and do you think that such a reception can be agreeable to a man who has known you his companion? No, Santillane, no. It is by no means suitable to my humour; farewell, let us part friends: let us both rid ourselves, the one of a censor of his actions, and the other of an upstart who forgets himself."

I was more incensed than moved at his reproaches; and suffered him to go without the least attempt to stay him. In the condition I was then in, the friendship of a poet did not seem to me so valuable, as that I should afflict myself for the loss of it. I found the means to comfort myself in the conversation of some of the King's under-officers, with whom a conformity of temper had within a little while

while united me strictly. These new acquaintance were men, most part of whom came from God knows where, and whose lucky stars had advanced them to their posts. They all lived already at their ease, and these wretches, ascribing the favours which the King heaped on them only to their own merit, had forgot themselves as much as I. We imagined ourselves persons of great consequence. O fortune! thus do you most commonly dispense your favours. The Stoic Epictetus was in the right in comparing you to a young lady of quality that prostitutes herself to her footmen.

B O O K IX.

C H A P. I.

Scipio would have Gil Blas marry, and proposes to him the daughter of a famous rich goldsmith. What steps were taken accordingly.

ONE night, the company being gone that supped with me, and being alone with Scipio, I asked what he had been doing that day. "A masterpiece," answered he, "I am going to marry you. I am procuring you the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance."

"A goldsmith's daughter!" cried I with a scornful air; "have you lost your senses? Can you propose me a citizen? Methinks, when one has some merit, and is upon a certain footing at court, one ought to have more elevated views." "Ah! Sir," answered Scipio, "do not take it after that manner. Remember that it is the man who ennobles a family, and be not more nice than a thousand lords whom I could name to you. Know that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats. Is not that a fine piece of goldsmith's ware?" When I heard talk of such a vast sum, I became more tractable.

tractable. "I submit," said I to my secretary; "the portion determines me. When shall I receive it?" "Softly, Sir," replied he, "a little patience. I must first break the matter to the father, and dispose him to approve of it." "Very fine," cried I, bursting out a-laughing; "is that to be done yet? Here is a marriage finely advanced." "More than you think for," rejoined he. "I desire but one hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and I will answer for his consent. But, before we proceed any further, let us come to a composition, if you please. Suppose I procure you a hundred thousand ducats, how much will fall to my share?" "Twenty thousand," replied I. "Heaven be praised," said he, "I had confined your acknowledgment to ten thousand. You are more generous by half than me. Come on; I will enter upon this negotiation tomorrow, and you may depend upon it I shall succeed, or say I am an afs."

Accordingly, two days after he said to me: "I have spoken to Signior Gabriel Saléro," for so was my goldsmith called. "I have extolled your merit and interest so much, that he gave ear to the proposal I made of accepting you for his son-in-law. You are to have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you let him plainly see that you are in the minister's favour." "If it is so," said I then to Scipio, "I shall soon be married. But, to the matter in hand, have you seen the daughter? Is she handsome?" "Not so agreeable as her portion," answered he. "Under the rose, this rich heiress is no very charming creature. By good fortune you do not value that." "Faith, no boy," replied I. "We courtiers marry only for the sake of marrying. As for beauty, we look for that in our neighbours wives; and, if by chance our own should happen to be handsome, we mind them so little, that they do us but justice, if they punish us for it."

"This

"This is not all," rejoined Scipio : " Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night, but it is agreed beforehand, that not a word is to be said of marriage. There are also to be several merchants his friends, where you will be only as a simple guest, and to-morrow he will come and sup with you after the same manner. You see by this, that he is a man who will study your temper before he proceeds any further. It will be proper for you to be a little upon your guard before him." " O gadzooks," interrupted I with an air of confidence ; " let him examine me as much as he pleases, I can lose nothing by this scrutiny."

This was punctually executed. I was conducted to the goldsmith's, who received me as familiarly as if we had seen each other already several times. He was a good citizen, who was, as we say, polite even to be fatiguing. He presented me to Sennora Eugenia his wife, and young Gabriela his daughter. I made them a number of compliments, without contravening the treaty. I said a great many fine nothings, the right phrases of a courtier.

Gabriela, no dispraise to my secretary, did not seem disagreeable to me ; whether it was because she was extraordinarily dressed, or because my eyes were dazzled with her fortune. Signior Gabriel's is a pretty sort of house ; I believe there is more silver in it than in the mines of Peru. Where-ever one turned one's eyes, this metal struck one's sight under different forms. Every room, and particularly that where we were, was a treasure. What a fine show was that for a son-in-law ! Signior Gabriel, that he might do more honour to his entertainment, had provided five or six merchants, all tiresome grave persons. They talked only of commerce ; and one might have said, that their conversation was rather a conference of traders, than the conversation of friends invited to supper.

I entertained the goldsmith in my turn the next evening.

evening. Not being able to dazzle him with my plate, I had recourse to another illusion. I invited such of my friends to supper, as made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be so ambitious, as to set no bounds to their desires. These gentlemen talked only of their future grandeur, and of the great and splendid posts to which they aspired. This produced the desired effect; the goldsmith, dazzled with their grand ideas, thought himself, in spite of all his riches, but a petty mortal in comparison of these gentry. As for my part, pretending to be moderate, I said that I should content myself with a middling fortune, as twenty thousand ducats a-year. Whereupon these wretches, who were never to be satisfied with honour or riches, cried out, that I was in the wrong, and that being, as I was, the favourite of the prime minister, I ought not to confine myself to so little. My intended father-in-law lost not one tittle of these words, and I fancied that I observed, as he was taking leave, that he was prodigiously delighted.

Scipio did not fail going in the morning to ask how he liked me, to which he answered, "I am charmed with him; the young fellow has won my heart. But," continued he, "Mr. Scipio, I conjure you by our old acquaintance, tell me sincerely; we have all our failings as you are sensible; let me know that of the Signior de Santillane. Is he a gamester? Does he wench? What is his predominant vice? I beg you not to conceal it from me."

"Signior Gabriel," replied the go between, "you affront me by asking me this question: I am more your friend than my master's; if he had any ill habit that might render your daughter unhappy, think you I should have proposed him for your son-in law? No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But, *entre nous*, I find no other fault in him but that of having none. He is too provident for a young man." "So much the better," replied

plied the goldsmith; "that pleases me. Go, friend; you may assure him that he should have my daughter, if he were not a favourite of the prime minister's."

My secretary had no sooner given me an account of this conversation, but I ran to Salero's to thank him for his favourable opinion of me. He had declared already his will to his wife and daughter, who, by their reception, gave me to understand, that they submitted without repugnance. Upon this, I carried the Signior to the Duke de Lerma's, whom I had prepared the evening before; and I presented him to his Excellency, who welcomed him with a graceful air, and expressed a great deal of joy that he had chosen for his son-in-law a man for whom he had a great kindness, and whom he designed to advance. He afterwards enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so much in my favour, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in me the best match in Spain for his daughter. He was so overjoyed that he could hardly forbear weeping. He embraced me closely upon our parting, and said to me, "Son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that I will not defer it above a week at most."

CH A P. II.

By what chance Gil Blas remembered Don Alphonso de Leyva, and of the service he did him merely out of vanity.

LET us leave the marriage for a minute; the order of my history demands it, and requires my relating the service I did Don Alphonso my old master. I had entirely forgot that cavalier, and it was upon this occasion that I recollected him.

It happened that the government of the city of Valencia was vacant. Upon hearing this news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I considered
that

that this employment would suit him to a tittle, and resolved to ask it for him, more out of ostentation than friendship. I represented to myself, that it would do me an infinite honour if I obtained it. Hereupon I addressed myself to the Duke de Lerma, and told him, that, having been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son, and having all the reason in the world to speak in their favour, I took the liberty to beg him to grant the government of Valencia either to the one or the other." The Duke answered me, " With all my heart, Gil Blas, I love to see you grateful and generous ; besides, you intercede for a family whom I esteem. The Leyva's are the King's good subjects ; they deserve the place very well ; you may dispose of it as you please ; I give it you for a marriage-present."

Ravished with having succeeded in my design, I went without losing time to Calderona, to draw up the patent for Don Alphonso : there I saw a great number of persons waiting, till Don Rodriguez should please to give them audience ; I passed through the croud to the closet-door, which was opened on my appearing. There I found I know not how many knights, commanders, and other persons of condition, to whom Calderona gave audience by turns. It was worth observing the different manner he received them. To one he would only give a little nod with his head ; to another he would make a bow, and conduct him to the closet-door. He put (as one may say), shades of respect in the compliments he paid to every one. On the other hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who (being shocked with the little regard he shewed them), cursed in their hearts the necessity that obliged them to cringe to such an upstart. On the contrary, I saw others who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous insolence. I made these observations in vain ; I was not capable of drawing any advantage thence to myself ; I did the same at my house, and

neither valued whether they approved or blamed my haughty behaviour, provided it procured me respect.

Don Rodriguez, having cast his eyes on me by chance, left a gentleman who was talking to him, very abruptly, and came to embrace me with such demonstrations of friendship as surprised me. "Ah, my dear brother," cried he, "what has procured me the pleasure of seeing you here? What can I do to serve you?" I informed him what had brought me thither; whereupon he assured me in the most obliging terms in the world, that he would dispatch it by the next day at the same hour. He did not confine his civility here; he conducted me to the door of his antechamber, a compliment he only paid to great noblemen, and there he again embraced me.

"What means all this respect?" said I to myself as I was going; "what does it presage? Is Calderona meditating my ruin? or has he a mind to court my friendship? or does he keep fair with me, with a view of getting me to be his intercessor with our patron, as foreseeing that his favour is upon the decline?" I did not know which of these conjectures to fix upon. On my returning to him the next day, he treated me after the same manner; he fatigued me with his civilities and caresses. It is true, he fell short of it in his reception of others who addressed themselves to him. He spoke short to one, was very cool to others, and sent away almost every one dissatisfied. But they were all sufficiently revenged by an adventure that happened, which I ought not to pass over in silence; it will be a caution for all clerks and secretaries that read it.

A man in a very plain dress, who did not appear of the rank he was, came to Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke de Lerma. Don Rodriguez did not so much as look upon the gentleman, but
asked

asked him after a blunt manner, "What is your name, friend?" "In my infancy," replied the cavalier very coolly, "I was called *Francillo*; I was since styled *Don Francisco de Zuniga*, and my title now is the *Count de Pedrosa*. Calderona, thunderstruck with these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, was willing to excuse himself: "My Lord," said he to the Count, "I ask pardon, if out of ignorance of your quality"—"I want none of thy excuses," cried *Francillo*, haughtily interrupting him, "I despise them as much as thy ill manners. Know that a secretary to a prime minister ought to receive every body civilly. Be, if thou wilt, vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's substitute, but do not forget that thou art but his valer.

The proud *Don Rodriguez* was prodigiously mortified at this accident; nevertheless he became not a jot more humble. As for me, I took notice of that rebuke, and resolved to be careful who I spoke to when I gave audience, as also, not to be insolent but with mutes. As *Don Alphonso's* patent was drawn up, I took it with me, and sent it by a courier to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke de Lerma, wherein his Excellency sent him word, that the King had just appointed him governor of Valencia. I did not in the least inform him what share I had in obtaining it; I did not even write to him, reserving to myself the pleasure of telling it in person when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his post.

CHAP. III.

Of the preparations that were made for the marriage of Gil Blas, and of the important adventure that rendered them fruitless.

TO return to the fair *Gabriela*, I was to be married to her in eight days; and prepara-

tions were made on both sides for the wedding. Salero had rich cloaths made for the bride, and I hired a waiting woman, a footman, and an old gentleman usher. These were all chosen by Scipio, who expected, with more impatience than I, the day for paying down the fortune.

The night before this so much wished-for day, I supped at my intended father-in-law's, with uncles, aunts, cousins, and a whole tribe of relations. In short, I acted the part of an hypocritical son-in-law to the life. I shewed a thousand civilities to the goldsmith and his wife. I counterfeited the passionate lover to Gabriela, and courted the whole family; listening, without impatience, to their flat discourse, and city-conversation. Accordingly, I had the good luck to please all the relations, as a reward for my patience; so that not one of them but seemed to be charmed with my alliance.

Supper being over, the company went into a large hall, where they were entertained with a vocal and instrumental concert, which was tolerably performed, though they had not chosen the best masters in Madrid. Our ears being agreeably ravished with several sprightly airs, it put us into such a gay humour that we began to dance. God knows after what manner we acquitted ourselves, since I was taken for one of Terpsichore's scholars, I who had never made any greater proficiency in this art, than what I had learned from two or three lessons which I had been taught at the Marchioness de Chaves, by a petty dancing-master who came to the pages. Having diverted ourselves very well, it was time for all of us to think of going home. I was profuse of my bows and embraces. "Dear son-in-law," says Salero, taking me in his arms, "I will bring you the portion to morrow morning in good specie." "You shall be very welcome," replied I, "dear father-in-law." Then, taking leave of the family,

family, I went to my coach which waited at the door, and directed my course homewards.

I was hardly two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's, when my coach was furrounded and stopt by fifteen or twenty men, some on horseback, some on foot, who cried, "Stand in the King's name." They had no sooner said thus, but they made me alight roughly, and get into a calash, where one of them accompanied me, and bid the coachman drive towards Segovia. I immediately judged that it was an honest alguazil who sat by me, and would have asked the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered me after the manner of those gentlemen, that is to say, like a brute, that he was not to give me an account. I told him that perhaps he might be mistaken. "No, no," replied he, "I am sure of my man, you are the Signior de Santillane; you are the person I am ordered to carry where we are going." Having nothing to say to these words, I held my tongue the rest of the night, whilst we travelled along the Mançanarez, in a profound silence. We changed horses at Colmenar, and we reached Segovia about the evening, where I was shut up in the tower.

CHAP. IV.

How Gil Blas was treated in the tower of Segovia, and how he came to know the cause of his imprisonment.

THE first thing they did, was to put me into a dungeon, where they left me to lie upon straw like one of the vilest malefactors. I spent that night, not in giving myself up to despair, for I was not yet wholly sensible of my misfortune, but in examining within myself, what could have caused my disgrace. I did not in the least doubt but it was Calderona's handy-work; however, it was in vain to suspect him of having discovered all; I

could not imagine how he could induce the Duke of Lerma to use me so cruelly. Sometimes I thought my seizure was unknown to his Excellency; at other times I fancied, that the Duke himself had done it for some reason of state, as ministers sometimes have served their favourites.

I was sensibly tortured with my various conjectures, when day, breaking through a little grated window, shewed me all the horror of the place where I was immured. I then set no bounds to my affliction, and my eyes became two fountains of tears, which were rendered inexhaustible by the remembrance of my prosperity. Whilst I was thus giving way to my grief, the gaoler came into my dungeon with a loaf and a pitcher of water for my day's subsistence. He looked upon me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, as much a gaoler as he was, he was moved with a sense of pity. "Prisoner," said he, "do not despair; you must not be so sensible of the misfortunes of life; you are yet young; after this you will see other days; in the mean time eat the King's allowance with a good courage."

My comforter left me at these words, to which I made no answer but by my sighs and complaints; and I spent the whole day in cursing my stars, without thinking of doing any credit to my provision, which, in the condition I was, seemed rather an effect of the King's anger than of his goodness, since it served to prolong the misery of the unfortunate.

During this night came on, and immediately a great noise of keys took up my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment after, a man entered with a wax-candle. On his approaching me, he said: Signior Gil Blas, you see one of your old friends; I am that Don Andrea de Tordillas, who lived with you at Grenada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, when you was favourite

yourite to that prelate. You begged him, if you remember, to use his interest for me, and he procured me the grant of an employment at Mexico ; but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I staid in the city of Alicant, where I married the keeper of the castle's daughter, and, by a series of adventures which I will relate to you presently, I am now become governor of the tower of Segovia. I am expressly ordered not to let you speak to any one, to allow you only bread and water for sustenance, and to make you lie upon straw. But, besides my having humanity enough to be touched with your misfortunes, you have done me a service, and my gratitude prevails over my orders. Far from being an instrument of the cruel usage you suffer. I intend to mitigate the hardship of your confinement ; rise and follow me."

Although the keeper very well deserved my thanks, my spirits were so confounded, that I could not answer him one word. However, I went with him cross a court-yard, and up a very narrow staircase, into a little room at the very top of the tower. I was not a little surpris'd, at my entrance into this chamber, to see two candles burning upon a table in brass candlesticks, and a cloth laid with two pretty handsome plates, knives, forks, &c. " Supper will be here in a minute," says Torde-sillas ; " we will both eat a mouthful : I design this corner for your lodging : you will be better here than in your dungeon. From your window you will have a prospect of the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delicious valley which extends itself from the feet of the two mountains that divide the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know very well that you will at first be insensible of such a fine landscape ; but, when the liveliness of your grief has given way to a pleasing melancholy, you will take a delight in entertaining your eyes with such agreeable objects. Besides this, depend upon it, you shall

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neither

neither want for linen, or any thing necessary for a man who loves neatness; as also you shall have a good bed, eat well, and I will supply you with as many books as you please. In a word, you shall have all the delights that a prison can afford."

I found myself a little comforted by these obliging offers, and resumed courage enough to return my gaoler a thousand thanks. I told him that his generous procedure restored me to life, and that I wished I might ever again be in a condition to express my acknowledgments. "And why should you not?" replied he. "Do you think you will always be a prisoner? You are in the wrong: and I dare assure you, that you will come off for some months confinement." "What say you, Signior Don Andrea?" cried I; "I fancy you know the cause of my misfortune." "I own it," replied he, "I am not ignorant thereof; the alguazil who brought you hither intrusted me with a secret, which I dare reveal to you. He informed me, that the King being acquainted that the Count de Lemos and yourself had one night carried the Prince of Spain to a suspicious house, had for your punishment banished the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, there to be treated with all the severity which you have undergone since your coming hither." "And how," said I, "has that reached the King's ear? That is the very circumstance that I want to know." "And that," replied he, "is what the alguazil did not tell me, and certainly he was ignorant of it himself."

As we were in this part of our conversation, we were interrupted by several servants who brought in the supper. They set upon the table a loaf, two glasses, as many bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which was a ragout of a hare's entrails, with a good deal of onion, oil, and saffron; in another an * olla podrida; and in the third a Turkey powt

* Olla podrida, a hodge-podge.

upon some marmelade † of berengena. When Tordefillas saw we had all that we wanted, he sent away his domestics, not being willing they should hear our discourse. He shut the door, and we both sat down over-against each other. "Let us begin," said he, "by what is most urgent. You must needs have a good stomach, after having been dieted two days." Having thus spoken, he loaded my plate with meat. He thought he was serving a wretch that was famished, and indeed he had some reason to believe that I was going to cram myself with his ragouts. However, he was deceived in his expectation; as much need as I had of victuals, I could not get a bit down, my heart was so full of my present condition. My gaoler in vain incited me to drink, and cried up the excellency of his wine, in order to drive out of my mind the melancholy ideas that continually afflicted me; had he given me nectar, I should then have drank it without pleasure. He perceived it, and, taking another method, he began to relate the history of his marriage in a diverting style. He succeeded yet worse this way than the other. I listened to his account with so much distraction, that, when he had done, I could not tell one word of what he had been saying. He judged very rightly, that he undertook in vain to divert my chagrin that night. Hereupon he rose from table as soon as supper was ended, and said: "Signior de Santillane, I am going to leave you to your repose, or rather to think at liberty on your misfortunes. But I repeat it to you, it will not be of long continuance. The King is naturally good. When his passion is over, and he represents to himself the deplorable condition you now are in, he will think your punishment sufficient." At these words the keeper went down, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off even

† Berengena, a little pompion, called *the apple of love*.

to the very candles, and I went to bed by the dim light of a lamp that was fastened to the wall.

CHAP. V.

*Of the reflections he made that night before he slept;
and of the noise that waked him.*

I SPENT at least two hours in reflecting upon what Tordefillas had told me. "Here am I then," said I, "for having been accessary to the pleasures of the heir of the crown. But how imprudent was it to do such a service to so young a Prince! for it is his being so very young that was all my crime; if he was more advanced in years, the King perhaps would only have laughed at what has now so much incensed him. But who could give the monarch such an information, without apprehending the resentment of the Prince, or Duke of Lerma? That minister will without doubt revenge his nephew's disgrace. How has the King discovered it? That is what I cannot comprehend."

This thought always recurred to me. However the idea that afflicted me most, that rendered me quite desperate, and which I could never banish out of my mind, was the plunder to which I rightly judged that all my effects were given up. "O my strong box," cried I, "my dear money, what is become of you? into what hands are you fallen? Alas! I have lost you in yet less time than I got you!" I drew to myself a lively picture of the disorder that reigned in my house, and I made thereupon several reflections, one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into a heaviness that proved favourable to me; sleep, which had fled my eyes the night before, came and locked up my senses; to which the goodness of the bed, the fatigues I had suffered, and the fumes of the meat and wine, all contributed. I slept soundly, and according to all appearance
day

day should have surpris'd me in that condition, if I had not been awakened by a noise very extraordinary in a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar accompanied with a man's voice. I listened attentively, but could hear no more, so that I thought it was a dream. But a minute afterwards, my ear was struck with the sound of the same instrument and voice, which sung the following verses.

* *Ah de mi ! un anno felice
Parece un soplo ligero ;
Pero sin dicha un instante
Es un siglo de tormento.*

This couplet seemed to have been made on purpose to renew my troubles. "I am but too sensible," said I, "of the truth of these words. Methinks the time of my prosperity is vanished very quickly, but I have already been an age in prison." I plunged myself anew in a dismal reverie, and began again to give myself up to despair, as if I had taken pleasure therein. Nevertheless my complaints ended with the night ; and the first ray of light, with which the sun enlightened my chamber, mitigated a little my disquiet. I got up to open my window, and air my room. I took a view of the country, whereof I remembered that the keeper had given me a fine description ; but I could not find any thing to justify his account of it. The Estrema which I thought at least rivalled the Tagus, seemed to me but a brook. Its flowery borders were set off with nothing but nettles and thistles, and the pretended delicious vale only saluted my eyes with a view of fields, most part of them uncultivated. I had not without doubt as yet attained to the pleasing melancholy which was to make me see things with other eyes than I did at that time.

* Alas ! a year of pleasure passes like the fleeting wind ; but a moment when one is unfortunate seems an age of torments.

I began

I began to put on my cloaths, and was already half dressed, when Tordefillas entered my room, attended by an old servant-maid, who brought me shirts and towels. "Signior Gil Blas," said he, "here is linen, do not spare it; I will take care you shall never want. Well," continued he, "how have you passed the night? Did sleep suspend your troubles for some minutes?" "I should perhaps not have been yet stirring," answered I, "if I had not been wakened by a voice in concert with a guitar." "The cavalier who disturbed your repose," replied he, "is a state-prisoner, whose chamber joins to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and is made to charm one: his name is *Don Gaston de Cogollos*. You may both visit each other, and sup together: you will find a mutual comfort in your conversation, and will be a great satisfaction to each other."

I told Don Andrea, that I should always acknowledge the favour he did me, in suffering me to unite my afflictions with the cavalier's; and, as I expressed some impatience to know this companion in misfortunes, our obliging keeper procured me that pleasure that very day. I dined with Don Gaston, whose beauty and good mien surprised me. Judge what he must be, to make so strong an impression upon the eyes of one used to see the handsomest young gentlemen about the court. Form to yourself an idea of a man made for conquests; one of those heroes in romances, whose single appearance gave pain to princes, and broke their rest. Add to this, that nature, who generally mingles her gifts, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of wit and courage; in short, he was a perfect cavalier.

If this gentleman charmed me, I had on the other hand the good luck not to displease him. He would not sing any more in the night for fear of disturbing me, whatever I could say to beg him not to constrain himself for me. A friendship is soon contracted

contracted between two persons oppressed by adverse fortune. Our first acquaintance was soon followed by a tender value for each other, which was heightened every day. The liberty that was given us to discourse together when we pleased, was of no small service to us, since by our conversation we reciprocally helped each other to bear our misfortunes patiently.

I went into his chamber one afternoon, as he was going to play upon the guitar. I sat down on a joint-stool, which was all the seats he had, that I might hear him more commodiously; and he, placing himself upon the foot of his bed, played a very moving air; to which he added a song, proper to express the despair to which love is reduced by the cruelty of his mistress. When he had done, I said to him smiling: "Signior Cavalier, you will never be obliged to make such verses in your amours: you were not made to find the ladies cruel." "You have too good an opinion of me," replied he; "I composed the lines you have just heard, to soften a heart which I thought adamant; and move a lady to relent, who treated me with the utmost severity. I must relate to you the story; it will give you at the same time an account of my misfortunes.

CHAP. VI.

The history of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo.

IT is now about four years since I set out from Madrid to Coria, to visit Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla my aunt, one of the richest dowagers in Old Castile, to whom I am sole heir. I had hardly got thither before love came to disturb my quiet. I lodged in an apartment whose windows faced the lattices of a lady who lived overagainst me, and whom I could easily see, her grates were so open, and the streets so narrow. I did not neglect this opportu-

opportunity, and I found my neighbour so handsome, that I was immediately charmed with her. I informed her of it by such lively glances, that it was impossible she should mistake them. Accordingly she understood them very well; but she was not a woman to value herself upon such a knowledge, much less to make a return to my grimaces.

I was desirous of knowing the name of this dangerous lady, who could make so sudden an impression upon the heart, and found she was called *Donna Helena*; that she was the only daughter to Don George de Galisteo who was lord of a considerable manor, some leagues from Coria: that she had often matches proposed for her, but that the father rejected all, because he intended to give her to his nephew Don Augustine de Olighera, who had the liberty of seeing and conversing every day with his cousin till the marriage should be concluded. This did not at all discourage me; on the contrary, I became the more enamoured; and the vain pleasure of supplanting a happy rival, perhaps, incited me more than my love, to endeavour to carry my point. I continued then to cast the most passionate looks at my Helena; I also courted her woman Felicia by my eyes, as to implore her assistance; I even talked with my fingers; but these pieces of gallantry were of no advantage; I got no more good from the maid than the mistress; they both seemed cruel and inaccessible.

As they refused answering the language of the eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters. I sent out spies to discover what acquaintance Felicia had in the town. They found out that her best friend was an old woman named *Theodora*, and that they visited each other very often. Ravished with this information, I went myself to Theodora, and engaged her to serve me by my presents. She espoused my cause, promised to procure me a secret interview

view with her friend at her house, and kept her word the next day.

"I am no longer unhappy," says I to Felicia, "since my pains have moved your compassion. How much am I obliged to your friend, for having disposed you to grant me the satisfaction of your conversation!" "My Lord," replied she, "Theodora has an absolute power over me. She has won me over to your interest; and, if I could procure your happiness, you would soon arrive at the height of all your wishes; but, with all my good will, I do not know if I can be any great help to you. I must not flatter you; never did you undertake a more difficult enterprize. You love a lady who is prepossessed in favour of another cavalier; and what sort of a lady! One of such pride and dissimulation, that if ever, by your constancy and addresses, you should happen to force a sigh from her, do not imagine her pride will ever suffer you to have the pleasure of hearing it." "Alas! dear Felicia," cried I, full of grief, "why do you tell me all the obstacles I have to surmount? This account kills me; rather impose upon me than make me despair." At these words, I took one of her hands, and, pressing it between mine, I put a diamond worth three hundred pistoles upon her finger, saying to her at the same time such moving things that I made her shed tears.

She was too much touched with my discourse, and too well satisfied with my behaviour, to leave me without comfort. Hereupon she removed the difficulties a little: "My Lord," says she, "what I have been representing to you, ought not to deprive you entirely of hope. Your rival, it is true, is not hated; he has free access to his cousin; can speak to her when he pleases; and this is what is favourable to you. Their being accustomed to see each other, every day, has rendered their conversation something insipid. They seem to me to leave
each

each other without any pain, and to visit without pleasure. One would swear they were already married. In short, I do not perceive that my mistress has a violent passion for Don Augustine. Besides, as to personal qualifications, there is such a difference between you and him, as cannot fail being observed to your advantage, by a young lady so nice as Donna Helena. Therefore do not lose courage, continue your gallantry, I will second you. I will let slip no opportunity of improving to your advantage all you do to please my mistress. It will be in vain for her to conceal her thoughts; I will find out her sentiments through all her dissimulation."

Felicia and I parted after this conversation, very well satisfied with each other; and I began to ogle Don George's daughter afresh. I also entertained her with a serenade wherein the verses you just heard were sung by a fine voice. After the concert, the servant, to sound her mistress, asked if she had been diverted. "The voice," said Donna Helena, "did not displease me." "And are not the words that were sung very moving?" replied the maid. "I did not at all mind them," answered the lady; "I only listened to the tune, I gave no attention to the verses, nor even do not want to know who gave me this serenade." "If that be the case," cried her woman, "poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is mightily out in his reckoning, and very foolish in spending his time in looking at our lattices." "Perhaps," says the mistress with a cool air, "it is some other cavalier who has just declared his passion to me in this concert." "Pardon me," replied Felicia, "it is Don Gaston himself; by the same token that he accosted me this morning in the street, and begged me to tell you in his name that he adores you, in spite of the cruelty wherewith you return his love; and, in short, that he should think himself the happiest of mankind, if you would allow him to make known his passion by his courtship,

ship, and gallant entertainments. This discourse," continued she, "is a sufficient proof I am not mistaken."

Don George's daughter immediately changed countenance, and looking at her woman with a stern air: "You might very well," said she, "have let alone entertaining me with this impertinent stuff. I desire you to trouble me no more with such informations; and, if that rash young fellow should ever dare to speak to you again, bid him address himself to a person who sets a greater value upon his gallantry than I; and chuse a civilier diversion than to be all day at his window, observing what I do in my apartment."

All this was faithfully told at a second interview I had with Felicia, who, pretending I was not to take her mistress's words literally, would have persuaded me that things were the worst in the world. As for me, who could discover no mystery therein, and did not think that the text could be explained in my favour, I was very diffident of the comments she made thereupon. She laughed at my distrust, and, asking her friend for paper, pen, and ink, said, "Signior Cavalier, write immediately to Donna Helena like a lover in despair. Draw her a lively picture of your sufferings, especially complain of her prohibiting your appearing at your windows. Promise to obey her, but assure her it will cost you your life. Give this a handsome turn, as you cavaliers know very well how, and I will answer for the rest. I hope the success will do me more honour than you are willing to allow to my penetration."

I should have been the first lover that ever had so fair an opportunity of writing to his mistress, and yet took not the advantage of it. I indited a most pathetic letter, and showed it before I folded it up to Felicia, who, having read it, said with a smile, that, if the women knew the art of charming the men,

men, the men, to make amends, were not ignorant of the secret to wheedle women. This said, she took my billet-doux ; after which, having bid me have a care to keep my windows shut for some days, she returned to Don George's.

" Madam," said she, when she came to Donna Helena, " I have met Don Gaston. He did not fail accosting me, and would have held his seducing discourse with me. He asked me with a trembling voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had spoken to you in his name. Then I, being hasty, and willing to execute your orders faithfully, interrupted him abruptly. I railed at him bitterly, loaded him with injuries, and left him in the street quite amazed at my malapertness." " I am overjoyed," answered Donna Helena, " that you have freed me from his importunity. But it was not necessary to speak to him so roughly. A woman should always be mild." " Madam," replied the maid, " one cannot get rid of a passionate lover with words spoken in a soft tone. One cannot even compass it by flying into a rage and passion. For instance, Don Gaston was not discouraged ; having, as I said, stunned him with abuses, I went to your relation, where you sent me. That lady unfortunately detained me too long. I say too long, because at my return I found my gentleman again. I did not expect such a rencounter ; the sight of him confounded me, and that so much, that my tongue, which never fails me upon occasion, was now utterly speechless. During this what did he ? He slipped a paper into my hand, which I kept without knowing what I did, and vanished in a moment."

Having thus spoke, she drew my letter out of her bosom, and gave it as if in jest to her mistress ; who having taken it as it were to divert herself read it in good earnest, and seemed afterwards very reserved.

" Indeed, Felicia," said she with a serious air, " you was an inconsiderate fool for receiving this note.

note. What will Don Gaston think of it; and what ought I to think myself? You give me room by your conduct to mistrust your fidelity, and him reason to suspect my being touched with his passion. Alas, perhaps he imagines at this instant that I read his letter over and over with pleasure! See to what a disgrace you expose a woman of my spirit." "Oh, no, Madam," replied the maid, "he cannot have such a thought; or suppose he had, he should not have it long. I will tell him at first sight, that I have shewn you his letter; that you looked upon it with a cool air, and that you afterwards tore it disdainfully without reading," "You may safely swear I never read it," said Donna Helena. "I should be horridly put to it to repeat only two words of it." not content with this, Don George's daughter tore my billet, and prohibited her maid's ever conversing with me.

As I had promised never more to play the gallant at my windows, since the sight of me was disagreeable, I kept them shut several days, that my obedience might be the more moving. But instead of ogling, which was forbid me, I prepared to serenade my cruel Helena afresh. With this design I placed myself one night under her balcony with the music, and the guitars had already begun to play, when a cavalier came sword in hand to disturb the concert, by wounding the performers on the right and left, so that they all immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage wherewith this insolent was animated, excited also my fury. I advanced to punish him, and we began a desperate combat. Donna Helena, and her maid hearing the clashing of swords, looked through their lattices, and saw two men engaged. Hereupon they shrieked out so loud, that they raised Don George and his servants; who ran, as well as several neighbours, to part the fray, but came too late.

late. They found upon the field of battle but one cavalier weltering in his blood, and almost lifeless, and perceived that I was the unfortunate man. They carried me to my aunt's, where I was attended by the most skilful surgeons in the City.

All the world pitied me, and especially Donna Helena, who then discovered the bottom of her heart. Her dissembling gave way to her inclination. Would you believe it? She was no longer the woman who thought it a point of honour to seem insensible of my courtship. She was a tender lover, who gave herself up without reserve to her grief. She spent the rest of the night in tears with her woman, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustine de Olighera whom she judged to have been the author of their grief, as in reality it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a master of dissimulation as his cousin, he had discovered my intention, without taking any notice of it, and imagining she returned it, he had this brisk action to shew he was not so patient as they thought him. Nevertheless this melancholy accident soon after gave place to a joy which made it forgotten. As dangerously as I was wounded, the surgeon's skill quickly restored me to health. I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George to ask Donna Helena for me. He consented to this marriage the more willingly, in that he looked upon Don Augustine as a man whom he might perhaps never see again. But the good old gentleman was apprehensive lest his daughter should be averse to the match, because her cousin Olighera had had so much liberty to visit her, and time to win her affection; but she seemed so willing to obey her father in this point, that one may conclude that it is an advantage in Spain, as well as elsewhere, to be a new comer amongst the ladies.

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As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, she informed me how very sensible her mistress had been of the unfortunate issue of my rencounter. So that being no longer able to doubt but that I was the Paris to my Helena, I blessed my wound, since the consequences had been so successful to my love. I obtained leave of Don George to speak to his daughter in her maid's presence. How sweet was this conversation to me! I pressed and conjured the lady so much to tell me if her father offered no violence to her inclinations, in delivering her up to my passion; that she owned it was not owing to her obedience only. After a confession so ravishing, I was wholly taken up with the care of making myself agreeable, and devising gallant entertainments, till our wedding day should come; which was to have been celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, whereat all the nobility of Coria, and the parts adjacent, were to have appeared in the greatest splendour.

Hereupon I gave a noble ball at a stately country-seat of my aunt's, near the city-gates towards Manroi, at which Don George, with his daughter, and all his friends and relations, were present. There was a concert of vocal and instrumental music ready by my order, and a company of strollers to act a comedy. In the middle of the feast they came to whisper me, that there was a man in another room who desired to speak with me; whereupon I arose from table to see who it was. I found a person unknown, who looked like a valet de chambre, and gave me a note, which I opened, and wherein were these words.

IF your honour is dear to you, as it ought to be to every knight of your order, you will not fail being to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. You will there find a gentleman who will give you satisfaction for the affront you have received from him;

him; and if he can, put it out of your power to have Donna Helena.

Don Augustine de Olighera.

If love is very predominant in the Spaniards, revenge is much more so. I could not read this challenge, and keep my temper; the very name of Don Augustine set my blood all in a flame, which almost made me forget the indispensable part I was to act that day. I was tempted to slip from the company, and go immediately in search of my enemy. However, I constrained myself, for fear of disturbing the guests, and told the man who had brought the letter: "Friend, you may tell the gentleman who sent you, that I have too great a desire to come to an engagement with him a second time, to fail being before sun-rise at the appointed place."

Having sent back the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my company and retook my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had any suspicion of what had passed. The rest of the day I seemed like the rest taken up with the diversions of the entertainment, which at last ended at midnight. The assembly broke up, and every one re-entered the city after the same manner as they came out. As for me, I staid behind at the country seat, under pretence of going to take the air next morning, which was only that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I expected day-break with impatience; which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and went out alone, as if to take a ride into the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered on the plain a man who came towards me full speed. I flew to meet him, in order to save him half the way; we soon met: "It was my rival knight," said he to me insolently, "it is, with regret I encounter you a second time; but it is your own fault; you ought, after the adventure of the

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serenade,

serenade, to have resigned Don George's daughter with a good grace, or else to have been assured that you should not come off so, if you persist in your design of appearing agreeable in her eyes." "You are too proud," replied I, "of an advantage that is perhaps less owing to your address than to the darkness of the night: you do not remember that the fortune of war is uncertain." "Not for me," answered he with an insolent air; "and I am going to shew you, that both by day and night I know how to punish those bold knights who dare incroach upon my pleasures."

The only answer I made to this haughty speech was by alighting, as did also Don Augustine; and fastening our horses to a tree, we began the combat with equal vigour. I will confess honestly, that I had to do with an enemy who understood fencing better than I, although I had learned two years, but he was a perfect master. I could not expose my life to a greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens that the strongest are overcome by the weakest, my rival, spite of all his skill, received a thrust through his heart, and fell down dead a minute after.

I returned immediately to the country-seat, where I informed my valet de chambre, of whose fidelity I was well assured, of what had passed. After this, I said to him: "Dear Ramirez, take a good horse, before the officers of justice can have knowledge of this affair, and go inform my aunt of it. Desire her, in my name, to send me some gold and jewels, and come and meet me at Placentia. You will find me at the first inn as you enter the city.

Ramirez discharged this commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Placentia within three hours after me. He told me that Donna Eleonora was rather rejoiced than afflicted at a combat that repaired the affront I had received in our first engagement; and that she had sent me all her gold and

and jewels, that I might travel with some pleasure in foreign countries, till she should accommodate my affair.

Not to mention superfluous circumstances, I shall only tell you, that I crossed New Castile, in order to go into the kingdom of Valencia, and embark at Denia. I passed over into Italy, where I put myself in a condition to survey the several courts, and make a graceful appearance there.

Whilst I thus endeavoured at a distance from my Helena, to delude, as much as in me lay, my love and disquiet, that lady, at Coria, bemoaned my absence in secret. Instead of approving her family's prosecuting me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that it might be made up, and my return be hastened by a speedy agreement. Six months were already passed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have always triumphed over time, if she had only had time to cope with; but she had yet more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman of the west of Galicia, came to Coria to take possession of a noble inheritance, which Don Miguel de Caprare his cousin had in vain disputed with him; and finding that country more pleasant than his own, he settled there. Combados was well made, seemed sweet-tempered and polite, and had the most insinuating wit in the world. He soon got acquainted with the people of fashion of that city, and was informed of all the affairs of every one.

He was not long ignorant that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed only to inflame men to their destruction. This incited his curiosity. He had a mind to see so formidable a lady. To this end he sought her father's friendship, and gained so far upon him, that the old gentleman looking on him already as his son-in-law, gave him free access to his house, and leave to speak to Helena in his presence. The Galician

was not long before he fell in love; it was inevitable; he disclosed himself to Don George, who told him that he approved of his addressee, but that he would not constrain his daughter, but left her free mistress of the disposal of her own hand. Hereupon Don Blas made use of all the gallantry he could devise to please the lady, who was wholly insensible so much was she prepossessed in my favour. However, Felicia was in the gentleman's interest, who had engaged her thereunto by his presents. She employed her utmost address to serve him. On the other hand, the father seconded the maid by his remonstrances, and nevertheless all they could both do for a whole year, was to torment Donna Helena, without being able to render her unfaithful to me.

Combados finding that Don George and Felicia in vain concerned themselves for him, proposed an expedient to them to surmount the obstinacy of so prejudiced a lover. "This," said he, "is what I have contrived. Let us counterfeit a letter from an Italian merchant to his correspondent at Coria, wherein, after an account of several things relating to commerce, the following words shall be inserted, "There is lately arrived at the court of Parma, a Spanish cavalier, called *Don Gaston de Cogollos*; who says he is nephew and only heir to a rich widow who lives at Coria, and whose name is *Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla*. He courts the daughter of a great nobleman, but he will not obtain her before they are informed of the truth. I am desired to address myself to you for that purpose. Wherefore I beg you send me word if you know this Don Gaston- and wherein his aunt's estate consists. Your answer will decide the fate of this marriage. Parma, the ——— &c."

This imposture seemed to the old man but a witty contrivance, a stratagem that was pardonable in lovers: and the waiting-maid, yet less scrupulous

than the good man approved of it mightily. The invention seemed to them so much the better, in that they knew Helena to be a woman of a great spirit, and likely to fall into the snare immediately, provided she had no suspicion of the cheat. Don George took it upon himself to inform her of my change, and, to make the thing have the greater appearance of truth, to let her speak to the merchant who had received this pretended letter from Parma. The project was executed as it was formed. The father said to Donna Helena with an emotion, wherein, in all appearance, was a great deal of spite and anger: "Daughter, I will no longer tell you that our relations beg me every day, never to suffer Don Augustine's murderer to enter our family. I have now a stronger reason to desire you to disengage yourself from Don Gaston. Die with shame for having been so faithful to him, he is an inconstant perfidious wretch; here is a certain proof of his infidelity: read yourself that letter which a merchant of Coria has just received from Italy." Poor Helena takes the counterfeit paper trembling, runs it over with her eyes, weighs all the expressions, and remains quite overwhelmed with the news of my inconstancy. After this, some remains of tenderness made her shed a few tears; but she soon recalled her pride to her aid, and wiping her eyes, said, with a resolute tone, to her father: "My Lord, you have been a witness of my weakness, be so likewise of the victory I gain over myself. It is done. I now only despise Don Gaston, I look on him as the basest of men; come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar. Let my marriage precede that of the perfidious wretch, who has repaid my love so ill. Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter, praised the noble resolution she had taken, and hugging himself for the success of his stratagem, made haste to gratify my rival's desires.

Thus

Thus was Donna Helena ravished from me. She resigned herself up rashly to Combados, without hearkening to her love, which pleaded for me in the bottom of her heart, without even doubting one minute of a report, which ought not to have met with so much credulity in a lover. The haughty woman only gave ear to her pride; the resentment of the injury she imagined I had done her beauty, got the better of her passion. However, some days after her marriage, she felt some remorse for having been so hasty. It came into her head that the merchant's letter might be forged, and this suspicion caused her a great deal of disquiet. But the amorous Don Blas did not leave his wife time to nourish any thoughts contrary to her repose. He only thought how to amuse her, and he succeeded by a continual series of different diversions, which he had the art to invent.

She seemed very well satisfied with so gallant a spouse, and they both lived in perfect union, when my aunt made up my affair with Don Augustine's relations. She wrote immediately to Italy, to give me advice thereof. I was then at Reggio in the Lower Calabria; I crossed over into Sicily, and from thence to Spain; in fine, I reached Coria mounted on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora not having informed me of the marriage of Don George's daughter, acquainted me with it at my return, and observing that it afflicted me: "You are in the wrong, nephew," said she, "to seem so sensible of the loss of a lady who could not keep faithful to you. Be ruled by me; banish from your memory a person who is not worthy to have a place there."

As my aunt was ignorant of Donna Helena's being imposed on, she was in the right to speak thus to me, and could not have given me better counsel. Accordingly I promised to follow it, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I were not

capable of conquering my passion. However, I could not resist the curiosity to know after what manner this marriage had been brought about. In order to inform myself, I resolved to address myself to Felicia's friend, that is to say, Theodora, whom I have before mentioned. I went to her, and by chance found Felicia there, who expecting nothing less than the sight of me, was confounded, and would have fled, to have avoided the explanation she rightly judged I should demand of her. I stopped her; "Why do you fly me?" said I: "is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having sacrificed me? has she forbid your hearing my complaints? or do you only strive to avoid me, to make your court to an ingrate for having refused to give ear to them?"

"My Lord," replied the maid, "I will own to you ingenuously, that your presence confounds me. I cannot see you again without being distracted with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have had the misfortune to be an accomplice in the fraud." "O heavens!" cried I out in a surprise, "what do you dare to tell me?" Then the wench gave me an account of the stratagem Combados had used to deprive me of Donna Helena; and perceiving that her recital pierced me to the heart, she said her utmost to comfort me; she even offered me her good offices to her mistress, promising to disabuse her, and to paint my despair to her; in short, to spare no pains to mitigate the rigour of my destiny; in fine, she gave me such hopes as a little alleviated my pains.

I pass over the infinite contradiction she met with from Donna Helena, in attempting to gain her consent to see me: however she compassed her ends. It was resolved between them that I should be let in secretly to Don Blas's, the first time he went to an estate, where he used to go from time to time a-hunting, and staid generally a day or two. This
design

design was soon executed: the husband set out for the country. Care was taken to inform me of it, and introduce me one night into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation by reproaches, but they stopt my mouth. "It is in vain," said the lady, "to call back to mind what is past. It is not now our business to move each other to compassion; and you are in an error, if you think me disposed to flatter your inclinations. I declare to you, Don Gaston, I have given my consent to this secret interview; I have yielded to the entreaties that have been made me, only to tell you in person, that for the future you must only think of forgetting me. Perhaps I should be better satisfied with my fate, if it were united to yours; but since heaven has ordained it otherwise, I will obey its decrees."

"What, Madam," replied I, "is it not enough to have lost you? is it not enough to see the happy Don Blas quiet possessor of the only person I could love, must I also banish you my thoughts? would you deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only good I have left? Ah! cruel, do you think that it is possible for a man whom you have once enslaved to recover his heart? Know your own power better than you do, and cease vainly exhorting me to erase you out of my remembrance." "Well then," answered she with precipitation, "cease also hoping that I will repay your passion with any acknowledgement. I have but one word to say to you: the wife of Don Blas shall never be Don Gaston's mistress. Take your measures thereupon. Fly: let us quickly end a conversation, wherewith I reproach myself, spite of the purity of my intentions and which I should think it a crime to prolong."

At these words, which deprived me of all hope, I fell at the lady's feet. I spoke in the most moving terms I could think of, and employed even

tears to soften her. But all this only conduced perhaps to excite some sentiments of pity, which she was very careful not to discover, and which were sacrificed to her duty. Having in vain used all manner of tender expressions, prayers, and tears, my love changed on a sudden into fury. I drew my sword to kill myself before the eyes of the inexorable fair, who no sooner perceived my action, than she threw herself upon me to prevent the consequences. "Stop, Cogollos," said she. "Is it thus you take care of my reputation? By thus taking away your life, you go to dishonour me, and make my husband pass for an assassin."

Far from giving the attention they deserved to these words, in the despair I was in, I only thought how to elude the attempts the mistress and the servant made to save me from myself. And undoubtedly I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who had been apprised of our interview, and who, instead of going into the country, had hid himself behind the hangings to hear our discourse, had not come quickly to join them. "Don Gaston," cried he, seizing on my arm, "recall your banished reason, and do not shamefully give way to the furious passion that agitates you."

I interrupted Combados. "Is it for you," said I, "to divert me from my resolution? you ought rather yourself to plunge a poniard in my breast. My love, unfortunate as it is, is offensive to you. Is it not enough you surprise me in your wife's apartment? needs there any more to incite you to revenge? Kill me, to rid yourself of a man who must adore Helena, till he ceases to live." In vain," replied Don Blas, "do you endeavour to engage my honour to put you to death. You are sufficiently punished for your rashness, and I am so well satisfied with my wife for her virtuous sentiments, that I pardon the occasion she has taken to make them known. Be advised by me, Cogollos," continued he,

“do not yield to your despair like a faint hearted lover; rather courageously submit to necessity.”

By such like discourses the prudent Galician appeased my passion, by little and little, and revived again my virtue. I withdrew with an intent to absent myself from Helena, and the places where she resided, and two days afterwards I returned to Madrid. There resolving no more to mind ought but making my fortune, I began to appear at court and procure myself friends. But I had the ill fortune to attach myself particularly to the Marquis de Villareal, a nobleman of the first rank in Portugal, who is now confined in the castle of Alicant, on suspicion of intending to deliver that kingdom from the subjection of Spain. As the Duke de Lerma knew that I had entered into a strict friendship with this Lord, he had me seized and brought hither. That minister believes, that I would be an accomplice to such a design; he could not have done a more sensible outrage to a man who is of noble rank and a Castilian.”

Don Gaston left speaking at these words. After which, to comfort him, I said: “Signior Cavalier, your honour cannot suffer by this disgrace, which in the end will certainly turn to your advantage. When the Duke de Lerma is once informed of your innocence, he will not fail to give you a considerable employment, to re establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.

C H A P. VII.

Scipio comes to the tower of Segovia, to look for Gil Blas, and informs him of a great deal of news.”

OUR farther conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who entered the room, and addressed himself to me thus. “Signior Gil Blas, I am just come from a young fellow who has been at the prison-gate, and asked if you was not here under

der confinement; and, upon my having refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. "Noble Governor," said he with tears in his eyes, "do not refuse my humble petition to be informed whether the Signior de Santillane is here. I am his head servant, and you will do a charitable action in suffering me to see him. You pass in Segovia for a gentleman full of humanity; I hope you will not deny me the favour of speaking a minute with my dear master, who is more unfortunate than criminal." In short," continued Don Andrea, "the young man has expressed such a desire to have a word with you, that I have promised him that satisfaction this night."

I assured Tordefillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure, than in letting me see that servant, who probably might have something of importance to tell me. I impatiently expected the moment when I should again have a sight of my faithful Scipio, for I made no doubt but it was him, nor was I deceived. He was admitted into the tower at night; and, when he perceived me, he broke out into extraordinary transports of joy, which were only to be equalled by mine. As for me, I was so ravished at his sight, that I stretched out my arms to him, and he clasped me in his without ceremony. The master and the secretary were confounded in this embrace, so glad were they to see each other.

When we had both a little disengaged ourselves, I inquired of Scipio in what condition he had left my house. "You have no longer any," answered he; "and to spare you the pains of asking question upon question, I will tell you in two words what has passed at your home. Your effects have been plundered both by the alguazil's men, and your own domestics, who, looking upon you as one already quite lost, have taken all they could lay their hands upon on trust for their wages. By good fortune for you, I had the address to save from their clutches

clutches two large bags of double pistoles, which I got out of your strong box, and are in safety. Salero, to whom I have intrusted them, will restore them to you when you get out of this tower, where I believe you will not be long a pensioner to his Majesty, since you were seized without the Duke de Lerma's privity."

I asked Scipio how he knew his Excellency had no share in my disgrace. "O," replied he, "that is a thing whereof I am very well informed. One of my friends, who is confident to the Duke d'Uzeda, has told me all the circumstances of your imprisonment." "Calderona," said he, "having discovered, by the means of a valet, that the Senora Serena received the Prince of Spain in the night under another name, and that it was the Count de Lemos who managed this intrigue, by the interposition of Signior de Santillane, resolved to revenge himself both of them and his mistress. That he might the better succeed herein, he goes secretly to the Duke d'Uzeda, and discovers all to him. The Duke, ravished to have so fine an opportunity to ruin his enemy, failed not to take the advantage of it. He informed the King of what he had just been told, and represented to him in such lively colours the dangers to which the Prince had been exposed, that he roused his Majesty's anger. So that he immediately had Sirena confined in the convent *des Filles Repenties*; banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment."

"This," continued Scipio, "is what my friend has told me; whereby you see your misfortune is the handy-work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or, to speak more properly, of Calderona."

I judged by his discourse, that my affairs might in time be re-established; that the Duke de Lerma, being piqued at his nephew's exile, would leave no stone unturned to recall that nobleman to court;

and I flattered myself that his Excellency would not forget me. What a fine thing is hope ! it comforted me at once for the loss of my plundered effects, and rendered me as gay as if I had reason to be so. Far from looking upon my prison as an 'unfortunate lodging, where I might perhaps end my days ; it seemed rather to me the means fortune would make use of, to raise me to some great post. For I reasoned within myself after this manner : Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and especially Friar Louis of Aliaga, (who is obliged to him for his place about the King), are of the prime minister's party. With the help of these powerful friends, his Excellency will overthrow all his enemies ; or else the face of affairs may be very soon altered : his Majesty's health is very precarious. As soon as he is dead, the Prince will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me hence, and present me to the new monarch, who will overload me with favours. Thus being already full of the pleasing hope of what was to come, I hardly any longer felt my present evils. I believe indeed, that the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary said he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed as much to the sudden change, as the hopes aforementioned.

I was too well satisfied with Scipio's zeal and integrity not to let him know it ; I offered him half the money he had saved from the pillage ; which he refused : " I expect," says he, " another mark of your acknowledgment." Being as much astonished at his speech as his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. Let us never part," replied he. " Let me unite my fortune to yours ; I have such an affection for you, as I never before had for any master." " And as for me," said I, " my boy, I will assure you, you do not love one that is ungrateful. From the first moment you came to offer me your service I liked you. We must either both of

us be born under Libra or Gemini, which are, as they say, the two constellations that unite mankind. I willingly accept of the proposed union; and, to begin it, I will ask the keeper to shut you up with me in the tower." "That will be a great satisfaction to me," cried he; "you have prevented me; I was going to conjure you to desire this favour; your company is dearer to me than liberty: I will only go sometimes to Madrid to breathe the office-air, and see if there has happened no change at court that may be favourable to you. So that you will have in me a confident, a courier, and a spy all in one.

These advantages were too considerable for me to deprive myself of them; wherefore I retained with me so useful a person, with the leave of the obliging keeper, who would not refuse me so sweet a comfort.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the first journey Scipio took to Madrid. What was the motive and the success. Gil Blas falls sick. The consequences of his sickness.

IF it is generally said that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, we ought also to say that they are our best friends, when they are faithful and affectionate. After the zeal Scipio had shewed for my service, I could only look upon him as an *Alter Ego*,* wherefore no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremonies between them; they were chamber-fellows, and had but one bed and one table.

There was in Scipio's conversation abundance of gaiety. One might justly have surnamed him the good-humoured young-fellow. Besides this, he had a head-piece, and I found an advantage in his counsel. "Friend," says I to him one day, "I fancy it would not be amiss to write to the Duke de

* Another myself.

Lerma; it can produce no ill effect; what are your thoughts thereupon?" "Ay but," replied he, "great men differ so much from themselves, from one moment to another, that I am not very sure how your letter will be received. However, I am for your writing at all events. Although the minister loves you, do not depend upon his friendship for the care of calling you into his remembrance. These sorts of protectors easily forget those persons whom they hear no longer mentioned.

"Although this be but too true," answered I, "I have a better opinion of my patron; I know his goodness; and am persuaded that he sympathizes with my pains, and that they present themselves incessantly before his eyes: without doubt he only waits till the King's anger is over, to deliver me out of prison." "So much the better," rejoined he: "I wish you may judge rightly of his Excellency. Implore then his assistance in a very moving letter, I promise you to give it into his own hands." Upon this I immediately called for pen and ink, and composed a piece of eloquence which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas extolled even above the archbishop of Grenada's homilies.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would have been touched with my melancholy account of the miserable state wherein I really was not; and in this belief I dispatched my courier to Madrid, who no sooner got thither than he went to that minister's, where he met with a valet de chambre who was my friend, and procured him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. "May it please your Grace," said Scipio to his Excellency, at the same time presenting him the packet wherewith he was intrusted, "one of your most faithful servants who lies upon the straw in a dark dungeon, in the tower of Segovia, most humbly conjures you to read this letter, which a gaoler in pity gave him the opportunity

opportunity to write. The minister opened the letter, and ran it over; but although he saw therein a picture capable of softening the hardest heart, far from seeming moved at it, he raised his voice, and said with a furious look to the courier, before some persons who could hear him; "Friend, tell Santilane that I think him very impudent in daring to address himself to me, after having been guilty of such an unworthy action, for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must no longer rely upon my favour, and whom I abandon to the King's resentment."

Scipio, as much assurance as he had, was confounded at this speech. However, in spite of his amazement, he would have interceded for me: "My Lord," replied he, "this poor prisoner will die for grief when he hears your Excellency's answer." The Duke made no other reply to my mediator but by frowning upon him, and turning his back. Thus did this minister treat me, the better to hide the part he had in the Prince of Spain's amorous intrigue; and this is what all petty agents ought to expect, who are employed by great men in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and informed me of the success of his commission, I was again plunged in that dreadful abyss wherein I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I even thought myself more unhappy, since I had no longer the Duke of Lerma's protection. My courage failed, and whatever they could say to restore it, I became again a prey to the deepest melancholy, which insensibly threw me into an acute disease.

The keeper, who was concerned for my preservation, imagining he could not do better than to call in physicians to my assistance, brought me two, who had both of them very much the look of being

ing very faithful servants to the goddesses * Libitina. "Signior Gil Blas," said he, presenting them to me, "here are two sons of Hippocrates, who are come to see you, and will recover you in a little time. I was so prepossessed against all doctors of physic, that I certainly should have given these but a very scurvy reception, had I been ever so little fond of life. But I was then so weary of it, that I thought myself obliged to Tordefillas for putting me into their hands.

"Signior Cavalier," said one of these doctors to me, "you must, before we proceed, repose a confidence in us." "I do a perfect one," replied I; "with your assistance, I do not doubt but I shall be cured of all my ails in a few days." "Yes, with the help of God," rejoined he, "so you shall; at least we will not be wanting in our endeavours." In effect, these gentlemen did their business to a miracle, and put me into such a fair way, that I going visibly to the Stygian lake. Don Andrea despairing of my cure, had already brought a Franciscan to dispose me to die well: already had the good father discharged that office and retired: and for myself, believing that my last hour was nigh, I made a sign to Scipio to draw near my bed. "Dear friend," said I, with a dying voice, so much was I weakened by their medicines and bleedings, "I leave you one of the bags that are at Gabriel's, and I conjure you to carry the other into Asturia, to my father and mother, who must be in need of it, if yet alive. But alas I am very much afraid they could not support under my ingratitude. The report Muscada made them of my unnatural behaviour, has perhaps been the cause of their death. If heaven has preserved them in spite of the indifference wherewith I repaid their tenderness, you may give them the bag of don-

* The goddesses that presided over funerals.

bloons, and beg them in my name to forgive me for not using them better; and if they are no longer living, I charge you to employ this money in having masses said both for the repose of their souls and my own." Having thus said, I reached out one hand, which he bathed in tears, without being able to answer me one word, so much was the poor young fellow afflicted for my loss. This proves that the tears of an heir are not always smiles hid under a mask.

I expected then to make my exit; nevertheless I was deceived in my expectation, my doctors having quitted me, and left nature at liberty to operate saved me by that means. The fever which they prognosticated was to carry me off, went away, as it were to give them the lie. I recovered by little and little, and, by the greatest good fortune in the world, my illness was succeeded by a perfect tranquillity of mind. I had then no need of being comforted. I preserved all the contempt for riches and honours that the opinion of an approaching death had instilled into me, and being restored to myself, I blessed my disgrace. I thanked heaven for it as for a particular favour, and took a firm resolution to return no more to court, even if the Duke of Lerma would recall me. I rather proposed to myself, if ever I got out of prison, to buy a cottage, and live like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design, and told me that to hasten the execution of it, he intended to return to Madrid to solicit my enlargement. "I have a thought," continues he, "comes into my head; I know a person that may serve you. It is the favourite maid to the Prince of Spain's nurse; a girl of wit. I will set her to work for you upon her mistress; I will try all means to release you from this tower, which is still but a prison, however well treated you are therein." "You are in the right," replied I; "go, friend, begin your

your negotiation without losing time : would to Heaven we were already in our retirement."

CHAP. IX.

Scipio returns to Madrid. How and upon what conditions he had Gil Blas restored to liberty. Where they both went on parting from the tower of Segovia, and what conversation passed between them.

SCIPIO then set out again for Madrid ; and in the mean time I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading. Tordesillas furnished me with more books than I desired ; which he borrowed of an old commander who could not read, and yet had a fine library to give himself the air of a learned man. Above all I liked the good moral authors, because I found every minute in them something that flattered my aversion to the court, and my love of solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a word of my manager, who at last returned, and said with a gay air. " For this time, Signior de Santillane, I bring you good news. The nurse will espouse your interest. Her maid, at my entreaty, and for a hundred pistoles which I have consigned to her, has had the goodness to speak to the Prince of Spain for your enlargement ; and the Prince, who, as I have often told you, can deny her nothing, has promised to beg the King his father to release you. I came as soon as possible to tell you the news, and am going straight back again, to put the finishing stroke to my work." At these words he left me, and set out for court.

His third journey was not long ; I saw my gentleman return at the week's end, with advice that the Prince had obtained my liberty of the King, but not without trouble. This was confirmed to me the same day by the keeper, who came to embrace me, and told me : " My dear Gil Blas, Heaven
be

be thanked, you are free. The prison-doors are open for you, but it is upon two conditions which perhaps will cause you a great deal of trouble, and which I am obliged to tell you with regret. His Majesty forbids your appearing at court, and orders you to quit both the Castiles in a month; I am very much mortified that they have forbid you the court." "And I am glad of it," replied I. "God knows my thoughts; I expected but one favour from the King, and he has done me two."

Being assured then that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, whereon my confident and I mounted next day, after I had taken leave of Cogollos, and thanked Tordefillas a thousand times for all the testimonies of friendship I had received from him. We set out gaily for Madrid, to draw our two bags, which had each of them five hundred doubloons, out of Signior Gabriel's hands. As we were upon the road, my associate said to me, "If we are not rich enough to purchase a magnificent estate, at least we may buy a competency." "If we should have but a hut," replied I, "I should be satisfied with my lot. Though I am hardly in the middle of my age, I find myself disgusted with the world, and I design for the future only to live for myself. Besides, this, let me tell you I have formed to myself an agreeable notion of a rural life, an idea that ravishes me, and makes me enjoy it beforehand. Methinks I already see the meadows enamelled hear the nightingales sing, and the rivulets murmur: at one time I imagine I am diverting myself with hunting, and at another time with fishing. Fancy to yourself the different pleasures that wait us in our solitude, and you will be charmed as well as me. As to our food, the plainest will be the best. A mouthful of bread may satisfy us when we are oppressed with hunger. We shall eat it with an appetite that will make us think it excellent. Pleasure

sure does not consist in the delicacy of exquisite viands, it is all within ourselves ; and this is so true, that I do not make my best meals at tables that I see furnished with the most epicurism and plenty."

"With your leave, Signior Gil Blas," said my secretary, interrupting me, "I am not altogether of your mind about this pretended frugality to which you bid me welcome. Why must we live like Diogenes ? If we do not fare so very hard, we shall be never the more unhealthy. Be advised by me, since we have (God be thanked) wherewith to render our retirement agreeable, do not let us make it the abode of famine and poverty. As soon as we have bought an estate, let us stock it with good wines, and all other provisions that are proper for men of wit, who do not quit the conversation of men to renounce the conveniencies of life, but rather to enjoy them with the greater tranquillity. "What one has in the house," says Hesiod, "does not make us uneasy, whereas what one has not may. It is better," continues he, "to be in possession of all things necessary at one's house, than to be wishing to have them."

"What the devil, Mr. Scipio," said I, interrupting him in my turn, "you understand the Greek poets ! pray where did you get acquainted with Hesiod ?" "At a learned man's," replied he, "I served a pedant some time at Salamanca, who was a great commentator. He would make you a large volume in the twinkling of an eye. He composed it of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin passages, which he extracted from the books in his library, and translated into Spanish. As I was his transcriber, I have retained I do not know how many sentences, as remarkable as that I have just quoted." "If it be so," answered I, "you have your memory well embellished. But to return to our project ; in which of the Spanish kingdoms do

do you think proper for us to settle our philosophical residence?" "I declare for Arragon," replied my confident. "We may find there abundance of charming places, where we may lead a delicious life." "Well then," says I, "so be it, let us stop at Arragon; I consent to it. May we find an abode there which may supply us with all the pleasures whereof my imagination is so full."

C H A P. X.

What they did on their arrival at Madrid. Who Gil Blas met in the street, and what success attended this rencounter.

BEING come to Madrid, we alighted at a little ready-furnished house, where Scipio had lodged in his journies thither; and the first thing we did was to go to Salero's, to draw our doubloons out of his hands. He received us perfectly well, and expressed a great deal of joy at seeing me at liberty. "I protest," continued he, "I was so sensible of your disgrace, that it gave me a disgust to an alliance with courtiers. Their fortunes are too much like castles in the air; for which reason I have married my daughter Gabriela to a rich merchant." "You have done very well," replied I; for, besides his fortune's being upon a more solid bottom, a citizen who becomes father-in-law to a man of quality, is not always contented with the gentleman his son-in-law."

Then changing the discourse, and coming to the matter in hand; "Signior Gabriel," continued I, "do us the favour if you please to deliver us the two thousand pistoles that "Your money is all ready," said he, interrupting me; and carrying us to his cabinet, he shewed us two bags, whereon these words were written on tickets: "These bags of doubloons belong to Signior Gil Blas de Santilane."

lane." "There," said he, "there is your money as it was intrusted with me."

I thanked Salero for the favour he had done me, and being very well comforted for the loss of his daughter, we carried off the bags to our lodgings, where we set about counting our double pistoles. The sum was right within fifty, which had been disbursed for the purchase of my liberty. We now only thought of putting ourselves in a condition to go to Arragon. My secretary took upon him the charge of buying a calash and two mules; and on my side I made a provision of linen and clothes. Whilst I was thus employed in running up and down the streets, and making my bargains, I met the Baron de Steinbach, the officer of the German guard, with whom Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted the German cavalier, who having also recollected me, came to me and embraced me: "I am extreme joyful," said I, "to see your Lordship in the best health in the world, and at the same time to have an opportunity to learn news of Signior Don Cæsar, and Don Alphonso de Leyva." "I can give you a certain account of them," answered he, "since they are both actually at Madrid, and what is more, lodged at my house. It is about three months since they came to this city to thank his Majesty for a favour Don Alphonso has received in acknowledgment of the favours his ancestors have done the state. He has been made governor of Valencia, without having asked that post, or desired any one to solicit for him. Nothing could be more gracious; and this shews that our monarch loves to reward valour.

Although I knew better than Steinbach what to think of it, I did not seem to have the least knowledge in the world of what he told me. But I expressed such a prodigious impatience to pay my respects to my old masters, that he carried me directly

rectly to his house to satisfy me. I had a desire to try Don Alphonso, and judge by the reception he gave me, whether he had still any affection remaining for me. I found him in a parlour playing at chess with the Baronness de Steinbach. He left his game as soon as he saw me, and advancing towards me in a transport, he clasped me round the neck, and said with an air that shewed a real transport: Santillane, you are then at last restored to me, I am everjoyed at it. It was not my fault we did not keep together; I begged you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva, but you did not regard my request. However I do not blame you, I even take the motive of your retreat kindly. But you ought to have let me heard from you since that time, and have saved me the pains of searching in vain for you at Grenada, where my brother-in-law Don Fernando sent me word you were settled."

After this little reproach" continued he, "tell me what you do at Madrid, undoubtedly you have some employment here. Be assured that I interest myself more than ever in your welfare." "My Lord, answered I, "it is not four months that I had a pretty considerable post at court. I had the honour of being secretary and confident to the Duke de Lerma." "Is it possible?" cried Don Alphonso, in an extreme amazement! "What was you intrusted with that prime minister's secrets?" I gained his favour," replied I, "and I lost it after the manner I am going to relate to you." Then I told him all the story, and I finished my recital at the resolution I had taken to buy me a cottage, with the little I had left of my former prosperity, and to live there a retired life.

Don Cæsar's son having listened to me with a great deal of attention, made answer: "Dear Gil Blas, you know I have always loved you; you shall no longer be fortune's may-game. I will set you

above her power, by making you master of an estate whereof she cannot deprive you. Since you design to live in the country, I will give you a little piece of land which we have near Lirias, four leagues from Valencia. You know it. It is a present we can make you without any inconvenience to ourselves. I dare answer for it, my father will not contradict me, and that it will be a sensible pleasure to Seraphina."

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who raised me in a moment. I kissed his hand, and being more charmed with his good-will than his present: "My Lord," said I, "your behaviour ravishes me. The gift you have made, is so much the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a service I have done you; and I would rather owe it to your generosity than gratitude." My governor was a little surprised at this discourse, and did not fail asking me what this pretended service was. I informed him, and gave him an account that redoubled his astonishment. He was far from thinking, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, that the government of Valencia had been given him by my interest. However, not being able any longer to doubt it; "Gil Blas," said he, "since it is to you I owe my post, I do not design to confine myself to the little estate at Lirias; I offer you besides that a pension of two thousand ducats a-year."

"Hold there, Signior Don Alphonso," cried I, interrupting him at these words, "do not revive again my covetousness. Riches are only proper to corrupt the morals; I have experienced it but too much. I willingly accept of your little competency at Lirias. I shall live there commodiously with the money I have elsewhere. But that is enough; and, far from desiring more, I should sooner consent to lose what superfluity I possess. Riches are but a burden in a retirement, where one desires only tranquillity.

Whilst

Whilst we were talking at this rate, Don Cæsar came in, who shewed no less joy at the sight of me than his son; and, when he was acquainted with the obligation his family had to me, he pressed me to accept the pension; which I again refused. In short, the father and the son carried me to a notary, where the grant was drawn up, which they both signed with more pleasure than they would have done any deed that had been to their profit. When the contract was dispatched, they delivered it into my hands, telling me the estate at Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession when I pleased. After this, they returned to the Baron de Steinbach's, and I flew to my lodging, where I ravished my secretary with admiration, when I told him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and informed him after what manner I had made the acquisition. "How much may this inheritance be worth?" said he. "Five hundred ducats a-year," answered I; "and I can assure you, it is an admirable solitude. I know it, by having been there several times, as steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is a little house on the banks of the Guadalaviar, in a hamlet of five or six cottages, and a charming country."

"What pleases me yet more," cried Scipio, "is, that we shall there have fine wild-fowl, with Benecarlo wine, and exquisite muscadine. Come, my patron, let us haste to quit the world, and get to our hermitage," "I want as much to be there as thee," replied I; "but I must first take a journey into Asturia. My father and mother are in no very good condition there. I intend to go seek them, to carry them to Lirias, where they may spend their latter days in quiet. Heaven has perhaps provided me this place of refuge for their reception, and will punish me if I should neglect it." Scipio approved very much of my design, and even incited me to put it in execution. "Let us lose no time," said
I
he;

he, " I have already secured a calash ; let us buy mules speedily, and take the road to Oviedo." " Yes, friend," replied I, " let us go as soon as possible. I think it an indispensable duty to share the pleasures of my retirement with the authors of my birth, Our journey will not be long ; we shall soon see one another at our hamlet ; and, when I get there, I will write over the door of my house these two Latin verses in golden letters :

*Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valet.
Sat me lufistis ; ludite nunc alios."*

The END of the THIRD VOLUME.





